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W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

EAST OF SUEZ

BY W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

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EAST OF SUEZ
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ON A CHINESE SCREEN
THE LAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
(*Sketches and Impressions in Andalusia*)

EAST OF SUEZ

A PLAY IN SEVEN SCENES

BY

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

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1922

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GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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EAST OF SUEZ. I

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Daisy

George Conway

Henry Anderson

Harold Knox

Lee Tai Cheng

Sylvia Knox

Amah

Wu

The action of the play takes place in Peking

SCENES

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SCENE I

EAST OF SUEZ

SCENE I

SCENE: *A street in Peking*

Several shops are shown. Their fronts are richly decorated with carved wood painted red and profusely gilt. The counters are elaborately carved. Outside are huge sign-boards. The shops are open to the street and you can see the various wares they sell. One is a coffin shop, where the coolies are at work on a coffin: other coffins, ready for sale, are displayed; some of them are of plain deal, others are rich, with black and gold. The next shop is a money changer's. Then there is a lantern shop in which all manner of coloured lanterns are hanging. After this comes a druggist where there are queer things in bottles and dried herbs. A small stuffed crocodile is a prominent object. Next to this is a shop where crockery is sold, large coloured jars, plates, and all manner of strange animals. In all the shops two or three Chinamen are seated. Some read newspapers through great horn spectacles; some smoke water pipes.

The street is crowded. Here is an itinerant cook with his two chests, in one of which is burning charcoal: he serves out bowls of rice and condiments to the passers-by who want food. There is a barber with the utensils of his trade. A coolie, seated on a stool, is having his head shaved. Chinese walk to and fro.

Some are coolies and wear blue cotton in various stages of raggedness; some in black gowns and caps and black shoes are merchants and clerks. There is a beggar, gaunt and thin, with an untidy mop of bristly hair, in tatters of indescribable filthiness. He stops at one of the shops and begins a long wail. For a time no one takes any notice of him, but presently on a word from the fat shopkeeper an assistant gives him a few cash and he wanders on. Coolies, half naked, hurry by, bearing great bales on their yokes. They utter little sharp cries for people to get out of their way. Peking carts with their blue hoods rumble noisily along. Rickshaws pass rapidly in both directions, and the rickshaw boys shout for the crowd to make way. In the rickshaws are grave Chinese. Some are dressed in white ducks after the European fashion; in other rickshaws are Chinese women in long smocks and wide trousers or Manchu ladies, with their faces painted like masks, in embroidered silks. Women of various sorts stroll about the street or enter the shops. You see them chaffering for various articles.

A water-carrier passes along with a creaking barrow, slopping the water as he goes; an old blind woman, a masseuse, advances slowly, striking wooden clappers to proclaim her calling. A musician stands on the curb and plays a tuneless melody on a one-stringed fiddle. From the distance comes the muffled sound of gongs. There is a babel of sound caused by the talking of all these people, by the cries of coolies, the gong, the clappers, and the fiddle. From burning joss-sticks in the shops in front of the household god comes a savour of incense.

A couple of Mongols ride across on shaggy ponies; they wear high boots and Astrakhan caps. Then a string of camels sways slowly down the street. They carry great burdens of skins from the deserts of Mongolia. They are accompanied by wild looking fellows. Two stout Chinese gentlemen are giving their pet birds an airing; the birds

are attached by the leg with a string and sit on little wooden perches. The two Chinese gentlemen discuss their merits. Round about them small boys play. They run hither and thither pursuing one another amid the crowd.

END OF SCENE I

SCENE II

SCENE II

A small verandah on an upper storey of the British American Tobacco Company's premises, the upper part of which the staff lives in. At the back are heavy arches of white-washed masonry and a low wall which serves as a parapet. Green blinds are drawn. There is a bamboo table on which are copies of illustrated papers. A couple of long bamboo chairs and two or three smaller arm chairs. The floor is tiled.

On one of the long chairs HAROLD KNOX *is lying asleep. He is a young man of pleasing appearance. He wears white ducks, but he has taken off his coat, which lies on a chair, and his collar and tie and pin. They are on the table by his side. He is troubled by a fly and, half waking but with his eyes still closed, tries to drive it away.*

KNOX. Curse it. [*He opens his eyes and yawns.*] Boy!

WU. [*Outside.*] Ye.

KNOX. What's the time?

[WU *comes in; he is a Chinese servant in a long white gown with a black cap on his head. He bears a tray on which is a bottle of whisky, a glass and a syphon.*

WU. My no sabe.

KNOX. Anyhow it's time for a whisky and soda. [WU *puts the tray down on the table.* KNOX *smiles.*] Intelligent anticipation. Model servant and all that sort of thing. [WU *pours out the whisky.*] You don't care if I drink myself to death, Wu—do you? [WU *smiles, showing all his teeth.*] Fault of the climate. Give me the glass. [WU *does so.*] You're like a mother to me, Wu. [*He drinks and puts down the glass.*] By George, I feel another man. The bull-dog breed, Wu. Never say die. Rule Britan-

nia. Pull up the blinds, you lazy blighter. The sun's off and the place is like a oven.

[WU *goes over and pulls up one blind after the other. An expanse of blue sky is seen.* HENRY ANDERSON *comes in. He is a man of thirty, fair, good-looking, with a pleasant, honest face. His obvious straightforwardness and sincerity make him attractive.*

HARRY. [*Breezily.*] Hulloa, Harold, you seem to be taking it easy.

KNOX. There was nothing to do in the office and I thought I'd get in my beauty sleep while I had the chance.

HARRY. I thought you had your beauty sleep before midnight.

KNOX. I'm taking time by the forelock so as to be on the safe side.

HARRY. Are you going on the loose again tonight?

KNOX. Again, Henry?

HARRY. You were blind last night.

KNOX. [*With great satisfaction.*] Paralytic . . . Hulloa, who's this? [*He catches sight of the* AMAH *who has just entered. She is a little, thin, wrinkled, elderly China-woman in a long smock and trousers. She has gold pins in her sleek black hair. When she sees she has been noticed she smiles obsequiously.*] Well, fair charmer, what can we do for you?

HARRY. What does she want, Wu?

KNOX. Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?

AMAH. My Missy have pay my letter.

HARRY. [*With sudden eager interest.*] Are you Mrs. Rathbone's amah? Have you got a letter for me?

AMAH. My belong Missy Rathbone amah.

HARRY. Well, hurry up, don't be all night about it. Lend me a dollar, Harold. I want to give it to the old girl.

[*The* AMAH *takes a note out of her sleeve and gives it to* HARRY. *He opens it and reads.*

KNOX. I haven't got a dollar. Give her a chit or ask Wu. He's the only man I know who's got any money.

HARRY. Let me have a dollar, Wu. Chop-chop.

WU. My go catchee.

[*He goes out. The* AMAH *is standing near the table. While* KNOX *and* HARRY *go on talking she notices* KNOX's *pin. She smiles and smiles and makes little bows to the two men, but at the same time her hand cautiously reaches out for the pin and closes on it. Then she secretes it in her sleeve.*

HARRY. I thought you were going to play tennis this afternoon.

KNOX. So I am later on.

HARRY. [*Smiling.*] Do it now, dear boy. That is a precept a business man should never forget.

KNOX. I should hate to think you wanted to be rid of me.

HARRY. I dote on your company, but I feel that I mustn't be selfish.

KNOX. [*Pulling his leg.*] To tell you the truth I don't feel very fit today.

HARRY. A little bilious, I dare say. Half a dozen hard sets are just what you want. [*He hands* KNOX *his coat.*]

KNOX. What is this?

HARRY. Your coat.

KNOX. You're making yourself almost more distressingly plain than nature has already made you.

[WU *comes back and hands* HARRY *a dollar, and then goes out.* HARRY *gives the dollar to the* AMAH.

HARRY. Here's a dollar for you, amah. You go back to missy and tell her it's all right and will she come chop-chop. Sabe?

AMAH. My sabe. Goo'-bye.

KNOX. God bless you, dearie. It's done me good to see your winsome little face.

HARRY. [*With a smile.*] Shut up, Harold.

[*The* AMAH *with nods, smiles and bows, goes out.*

KNOX. Harry, my poor friend, is it possible that you have an assignation?

HARRY. What is possible is that if you don't get out quick I'll throw you out.

KNOX. Why didn't you say you were expecting a girl?

HARRY. I'm not; I'm expecting a lady.

KNOX. Are you sure you know how to behave? If you'd like me to stay and see you don't do the wrong thing I'll chuck my tennis. I'm always ready to sacrifice myself for a friend.

HARRY. Has it struck you that the distance from the verandah to the street is very considerable?

KNOX. And the pavement is hard. I flatter myself I can take a hint. I wonder where the devil my pin is. I left it on the table.

HARRY. I expect Wu put it away.

KNOX. It's much more likely that old woman pinched it.

HARRY. Oh, nonsense. She wouldn't dream of such a thing. I believe Mrs. Rathbone's had her for ages.

KNOX. Who is Mrs. Rathbone?

HARRY. [*Not wishing to be questioned.*] A friend of mine.

[GEORGE CONWAY *comes in. He is a tall, dark man in the early thirties. He is a handsome, well-built fellow, of a somewhat rugged appearance, but urbane and self-assured.*

GEORGE. May I come in?

HARRY. [*Eagerly, shaking him warmly by the hand.*] At last. By Jove, it's good to see you again. You know Knox, don't you?

GEORGE. I think so.

KNOX. I wash bottles in the B. A. T. I don't expect the legation bloods to be aware of my existence.

GEORGE. [*With a twinkle in his eye.*] I don't know that an Assistant Chinese Secretary is such a blood as all that.

KNOX. You've just been down to Fuchow, haven't you?

GEORGE. Yes, I only got back this morning.

KNOX. Did you see Freddy Baker by any chance?

GEORGE. Yes, poor chap.

KNOX. Oh, I've got no pity for him. He's just a damned fool.

HARRY. Why?

KNOX. Haven't you heard? He's married a half-caste.

HARRY. What of it? I believe she's a very pretty girl.

KNOX. I daresay she is. But hang it all, he needn't have married her.

GEORGE. I don't think it was a very wise thing to do.

HARRY. I should have thought all those prejudices were out of date. Why shouldn't a man marry a half-caste if he wants to?

KNOX. It can't be very nice to have a wife whom even the missionary ladies turn up their noses at.

HARRY. [*With a shrug of the shoulders.*] You wait till Freddy's number one in Hankow and can entertain. I bet the white ladies will be glad enough to know his missus then.

GEORGE. Yes, but that's just it. He'll never get a good job with a Eurasian wife.

HARRY. He's in Jardine's, isn't he? Do you mean to say it's going to handicap a man in a shipping firm because he's married a woman who's partly Chinese?

GEORGE. Of course it is. Jardine's are about the most important firm in China and the manager of one of their principal branches has definite social obligations. Freddy Baker will be sent to twopenny halfpenny outports where his wife doesn't matter.

KNOX. I think he's damned lucky if he's not asked to resign.

HARRY. It's cruel. His wife may be a charming and cultivated woman.

KNOX. Have you ever known a half-caste that was?

HARRY. I have.

KNOX. Well, I've been in this country for seven years and I've never met one, male or female, that didn't give me the shivers.

HARRY. I've no patience with you. You're a perfect damned fool.

KNOX. [*A little surprised, but quite good-humoured.*] You're getting rather excited, aren't you?

HARRY. [*Hotly.*] I hate injustice.

GEORGE. Do you think it really is injustice? The English are not an unkindly race. If they've got a down on half-castes there are probably very good grounds for it.

HARRY. What are they?

KNOX. We don't much like their morals, but we can't stick their manners.

GEORGE. Somehow or other they seem to inherit all the bad qualities of the two races from which they spring and none of the good ones. I'm sure there are exceptions, but on the whole the Eurasian is vulgar and noisy. He can't tell the truth if he tries.

KNOX. To do him justice, he seldom tries.

GEORGE. He's as vain as a peacock. He'll cringe when he's afraid of you and he'll bully when he's not. You can never rely on him. He's crooked from the crown of his German hat to the toes of his American boots.

KNOX. Straight from the shoulder. Take the count, old man.

HARRY. [*Frigidly.*] Oughtn't you to be going?

KNOX. [*Smiling.*] No, but I will.

HARRY. I'm sorry if I was rude to you just now, old man.

KNOX. Silly ass, you've broken no bones; my self-esteem, thank God, is unimpaired.

[*He goes out.*

HARRY. I say, I'm awfully glad you're back, George. You can't think how I miss you when you're away.

GEORGE. As soon as the shooting starts we'll try and get two or three days together in the country.

HARRY. Yes, that would be jolly. [*Calling.*] Wu.

WU. [*Outside.*] Ye'.

HARRY. Bring tea for three.

GEORGE. Who is the third?

HARRY. When you said you could come round I asked somebody I want you very much to meet.

GEORGE. Who is that?

HARRY. Mrs. Rathbone . . . I'm going to be married to her and we want you to be our best man.

GEORGE. Harry.

HARRY. [*Boyishly.*] I thought you'd be surprised.

GEORGE. My dear old boy, I am so glad. I hope you'll be awfully happy.

HARRY. I'm awfully happy now.

GEORGE. Why have you kept it so dark?

HARRY. I didn't want to say anything till it was all settled. Besides, I've only known her six weeks. I met her when I was down in Shanghai . . .

GEORGE. Is she a widow?

HARRY. Yes, she was married to an American in the F. M. S.

GEORGE. Is she American?

HARRY. Only by marriage. I'm afraid she didn't have a very happy married life.

GEORGE. Poor thing. I think I'd take a small bet that you won't beat her.

HARRY. I mean to try my best to make her happy.

GEORGE. You old fool, I've never known a man who was likely to make a better husband.

HARRY. I'm most awfully in love with her, George.

GEORGE. Isn't that ripping? How old is she?

HARRY. Only twenty-two. She's the loveliest thing you ever saw.

GEORGE. And is she in love with you?

HARRY. She says so.

GEORGE. She damned well ought to be.

HARRY. I do hope you'll like her, George.

GEORGE. Of course I shall. You're not the sort of chap to fall in love with a woman who isn't nice.

[HARRY *walks up and down for a moment restlessly.*

HARRY. Will you have a whisky and soda?

GEORGE. No, thanks . . . I'll wait for tea.

HARRY. She ought to be here in a moment. [*Suddenly making up his mind.*] It's no good beating about the bush. I may as well tell you at once. Her—her mother was Chinese.

GEORGE. [*Unable to conceal his dismay.*] Oh, Harry. [*A pause.*] I wish I hadn't said all that I did just now.

HARRY. Of course you didn't know.

GEORGE. [*Gravely.*] I should have had to say something very like it, Harry. But I shouldn't have put it so bluntly.

HARRY. You said yourself there were exceptions.

GEORGE. I know. [*Distressed.*] Won't your people be rather upset?

HARRY. I don't see how it can matter to them. They're nine thousand miles away.

GEORGE. Who was her father?

HARRY. Oh, he was a merchant. He's dead. And her mother is too.

GEORGE. That's something. I don't think you'd much like having a Chinese mother-in-law about the place.

HARRY. George, you won't let it make any difference, will you? We've known one another all our lives.

GEORGE. My dear old chap, as far as I'm concerned I shouldn't care if you married the first cousin of the Ace of Spades. I don't want you to make a hash of things.

HARRY. Wait till you see her. She's the most fascinating thing you ever met.

GEORGE. Yes, they can be charming. I was awfully in love with a half—with a Eurasian girl myself years ago. It was before you came out to the country. I wanted to marry her.

HARRY. Why didn't you?

GEORGE. It was up in Chung-king. I'd just been appointed vice-consul. I was only twenty-three. The Minister wired from Peking that I'd have to resign if I did. I hadn't a bob except my salary and they transferred me to Canton to get me away.

HARRY. It's different for you. You're in the service and you may be Minister one of these days. I'm only a merchant.

GEORGE. Even for you there'll be difficulties, you know. Has it occurred to you that the white ladies won't be very nice?

HARRY. I can do without their society.

GEORGE. You must know some people. It means you'll have to hobnob with Eurasian clerks and their wives. I'm afraid you'll find it pretty rotten.

HARRY. If you'll stick to me I don't care.

GEORGE. I suppose you've absolutely made up your mind?

HARRY. Absolutely.

GEORGE. In that case I've got nothing more to say. You can't expect me not to be a little disappointed, but after all the chief thing is your happiness, and whatever I can do I will. You can put your shirt on that.

HARRY. You're a brick, George.

GEORGE. The little lady ought to be here, oughtn't she?

HARRY. I think I hear her on the stairs.

[*He goes to the entrance and then out.* WU *brings in the tea and sets it on the table.* GEORGE *walks over to the parapet and looks thoughtfully before him. There is a sound of voices in the adjoining room.*

HARRY. [*Outside.*] Come in; he's on the verandah.

DAISY. [*Outside.*] One brief look in the glass and then I'm ready.

[HARRY *enters.*

HARRY. She's just coming.

GEORGE. I bet she's powdering her nose.

DAISY. Here I am.

[DAISY *enters.* SHE *is an extremely pretty woman, beautifully, perhaps a little showily, dressed. She has a pale, very clear, slightly sallow skin, and beautiful dark eyes. There is only the very faintest suspicion in them of the Chinese slant. Her hair is abundant and black.*

HARRY. This is George Conway, Daisy.

[GEORGE *stares at her. At first he is not quite sure that he recognizes her, then suddenly he does, but only the slightest movement of the eyes betrays him.*

DAISY. How do you do. I told Harry I had an idea I must have met you somewhere. I don't think I have after all.

HARRY. George flatters himself he's not easily forgotten.

DAISY. But I've heard so much about you from Harry that I feel as though we were old friends.

GEORGE. It's very kind of you to say so.

HARRY. Supposing you poured out the tea, Daisy.

GEORGE. I'm dying for a cup.

[*She sits down and proceeds to do so.*

DAISY. Harry is very anxious that you should like me.

HARRY. George and I have known one another since we were kids. His people and mine live quite close to one another at home.

DAISY. But I'm not blaming you. I'm only wondering how I shall ingratiate myself with him.

HARRY. He looks rather severe, but he isn't really. I think you've only got to be your natural charming self.

DAISY. Have you told him about the house?

HARRY. No. [*To George.*] You know the temple the Harrisons used to have. We've taken that.

GEORGE. Oh, it's a ripping place. But won't you find it rather a nuisance to have those old monks on the top of you all the time?

HARRY. Oh, I don't think so. Our part is quite separate, you know, and the Harrisons made it very comfortable.

[HAROLD KNOX *comes in. He has changed into tennis things.*

KNOX. I say, Harry . . . [*He sees* DAISY.] Oh, I beg your pardon.

HARRY. Mr. Knox—Mrs. Rathbone.

[KNOX *gives her a curt nod, but she holds out her hand affably. He takes it.*

DAISY. How do you do.

KNOX. I'm sorry to disturb you, Harry, but old Ku Faung Min is downstairs and wants to see you.

HARRY. Tell him to go to blazes. The office is closed.

KNOX. He's going to Hankow tonight and he says he must see you before he goes. He's got some big order to give.

HARRY. Oh, curse him. I know what he is. He'll keep me talking for half an hour. D'you mind if I leave you?

DAISY. Of course not. It'll give me a chance of making Mr. Conway's acquaintance.

HARRY. I'll get rid of him as quickly as I can.

[*He goes out accompanied by Knox.*

KNOX. [*As he goes.*] Good-bye.

[GEORGE *looks at* DAISY *for a moment. She smiles at him. There is a silence.*

GEORGE. Why didn't you warn me that it was you I was going to meet?

DAISY. I didn't know what you'd say about me to Harry if you knew.

GEORGE. It was rather a risk, wasn't it? Supposing I'd blurted out the truth.

DAISY. I trusted to your diplomatic training. Besides, I'd prepared for it. I told him I thought I'd met you.

GEORGE. Harry and I have been pals all our lives. I brought him out to China and I got him his job. When he

had cholera he would have died if I hadn't pulled him through.

DAISY. I know. And in return he worships the ground you tread on. I've never known one man think so much of another as he does of you.

GEORGE. All that's rot, of course. Sometimes I don't know how I'm going to live up to the good opinion Harry has of me. But when you've done so much for a pal as I have for him it gives you an awful sense of responsibility towards him.

DAISY. What do you mean by that?

[*A short pause.*

GEORGE. I'm not going to let you marry him.

DAISY. He's so much in love with me that he doesn't know what to do with himself.

GEORGE. I know he is. But if you were in love with him you wouldn't be so sure of it.

DAISY. [*With a sudden change of tone.*] Why not? I was sure of your love. And God knows I was in love with you.

[GEORGE *makes a gesture of dismay. He is taken aback for a moment, but he quickly recovers.*

GEORGE. You don't know what sort of a man Harry is. He's not like the fellows you've been used to. He's never knocked around as most of us do. He's always been as straight as a die.

DAISY. I know.

GEORGE. Have mercy on him. Even if there were nothing else against you he's not the sort of chap for you to marry. He's awfully English.

DAISY. If he doesn't mind marrying a Eurasian I really don't see what business it is of yours.

GEORGE. But you know very well that that isn't the only thing against you.

DAISY. I haven't an idea what you mean.

GEORGE. Haven't you? You forget the war. When we heard there was a very pretty young woman, appar-

ently with plenty of money, living at the Hong Kong Hotel on very familiar terms with a lot of naval fellows, it became our business to make enquiries. I think I know everything there is against you.

DAISY. Have you any right to make use of information you've acquired officially?

GEORGE. Don't be a fool, Daisy.

DAISY. [*Passionately.*] Tell him then. You'll break his heart. You'll make him utterly wretched. But he'll marry me all the same. When a man's as much in love as he is he'll forgive everything.

GEORGE. I think it's horrible. If you loved him you couldn't marry him. It's heartless.

DAISY. [*Violently.*] How dare you say that? You. You. You know what I am. Yes, it's all true. I don't know what you know but it can't be worse than the truth. And whose fault is it? Yours. If I'm rotten it's you who made me rotten.

GEORGE. I? No. You've got no right to say that. It's cruel. It's infamous.

DAISY. I've touched you at last, have I? Because you know it's true. Don't you remember when I first came to Chung-king? I was seventeen. My father had sent me to England to school when I was seven. I never saw him for ten years. And at last he wrote and said I was to come back to China. You came and met me on the boat and told me my father had had a stroke and was dead. You took me to the Presbyterian mission.

GEORGE. That was my job. I was awfully sorry for you.

DAISY. And then in a day or two you came and told me that my father hadn't left anything and what there was went to his relations in England.

GEORGE. Naturally he didn't expect to die.

DAISY. [*Passionately.*] If he was going to leave me like that why didn't he let me stay with my Chinese mother? Why did he bring me up like a lady? Oh, it was cruel.

GEORGE. Yes. It was unpardonable.

DAISY. I was so lonely and so frightened. You seemed to be sorry for me. You were the only person who was really kind to me. You were practically the first man I'd known. I loved you. I thought you loved me. Oh, say that you loved me then, George.

GEORGE. You know I did.

DAISY. I was very innocent in those days. I thought that when two people loved one another they married. I wasn't a Eurasian then, George. I was like any other English girl. If you'd married me I shouldn't be what I am now. But they took you away from me. You never even said good-bye to me. You wrote and told me you'd been transferred to Canton.

GEORGE. I couldn't say good-bye to you, Daisy. They said that if I married you I'd have to leave the service. I was absolutely penniless. They dinned it into my ears that if a white man marries a Eurasian he's done for. I wouldn't listen to them, but in my heart I knew it was true.

DAISY. I don't blame you. You wanted to get on, and you have, haven't you? You're Assistant Chinese Secretary already and Harry says you'll be Minister before you've done. It seems rather hard that I should have had to pay the price.

GEORGE. Daisy, you'll never know what anguish I suffered. I can't expect you to care. It's very natural if you hate me. I was ambitious. I didn't want to be a failure. I knew that it was madness to marry you. I had to kill my love. I couldn't. It was stronger than I was. At last I couldn't help myself. I made up my mind to chuck everything and take the consequences. I was just starting for Chung-king when I heard you were living in Shanghai with a rich Chinaman.

[DAISY *gives a little moan. There is a silence.*

DAISY. They hated me at the mission. They found fault with me from morning till night. They blamed me

because you wanted to marry me and they treated me as if I was a designing cat. When you went away they heaved a sigh of relief. Then they started to convert me. They thought I'd better become a school teacher. They hated me because I was seventeen. They hated me because I was pretty. Oh, the brutes. They killed all the religion I'd got. There was only one person who seemed to care if I was alive or dead. That was my mother. Oh, I was so ashamed the first time I saw her. At school in England I'd told them so often that she was a Chinese princess that I almost believed it myself. My mother was a dirty little ugly Chinawoman. I'd forgotten all my Chinese and I had to talk to her in English. She asked me if I'd like to go to Shanghai with her. I was ready to do anything in the world to get away from the mission and I thought in Shanghai I shouldn't be so far away from you. They didn't want me to go, but they couldn't keep me against my will. When we got to Shanghai she sold me to Lee Tai Cheng for two thousand dollars.

GEORGE. How terrible.

DAISY. I've never had a chance. Oh, George, isn't it possible for a woman to turn over a new leaf? You say that Harry's good and kind. Don't you see what that means to me? Because he'll think me good I shall be good. After all, he couldn't have fallen in love with me if I'd been entirely worthless. I hate the life I've led. I want to go straight. I swear I'll make him a good wife. Oh, George, if you ever loved me have pity on me. If Harry doesn't marry me I'm done.

GEORGE. How can a marriage be happy that's founded on a tissue of lies?

DAISY. I've never told Harry a single lie.

GEORGE. You told him you hadn't been happily married.

DAISY. That wasn't a lie.

GEORGE. You haven't been married at all.

DAISY. [*With a roguish look.*] Well then, I haven't been happily married, have I?

GEORGE. Who was this fellow Rathbone?

DAISY. He was an American in business at Singapore. I met him in Shanghai. I hated Lee. Rathbone asked me to go to Singapore with him and I went. I lived with him for four years.

GEORGE. Then you went back to Lee Tai Cheng.

DAISY. Rathbone died. There was nothing else to do. My mother was always nagging me to go back to him. He's rich and she makes a good thing out of it.

GEORGE. I thought she was dead.

DAISY. No. I told Harry she was because I thought it would make it easier for him.

GEORGE. She isn't with you now, is she?

DAISY. No, she lives at Ichang. She doesn't bother me as long as I send her something every month.

GEORGE. Why did you tell Harry that you were twenty-two? It's ten years since you came to China and you were seventeen then.

DAISY. [*With a twinkle in her eye.*] Any woman of my age will tell you that seventeen and ten are twenty-two.

[GEORGE *does not smile. With frowning brow he walks up and down.*

GEORGE. Oh, I wish to God I knew nothing about you. I can't bring myself to tell him and yet how can I let him marry you in absolute ignorance? Oh, Daisy, for your sake as well as for his I beseech you to tell him the whole truth and let him decide for himself.

DAISY. And break his heart? There's not a missionary who believes in God as he believes in me. If he loses his trust in me he loses everything. Tell him if you think you must, if you have no pity, if you have no regret for all the shame and misery you brought on me, you, you, you—but if you do, I swear, I swear to God that I shall kill myself. I won't go back to that hateful life.

[*He looks at her earnestly for a moment.*

GEORGE. I don't know if I'm doing right or wrong. I shall tell him nothing.

[DAISY *gives a deep sigh of relief.* HARRY *comes in.*

HARRY. I say, I'm awfully sorry to have been so long. I couldn't get the old blighter to go.

DAISY. [*With complete self-control.*] If I say you've been an age it'll look as though Mr. Conway had been boring me.

HARRY. I hope you've made friends.

DAISY. [*To* GEORGE.] Have we?

GEORGE. I hope so. But now I think I must bolt. I have a long Chinese document to translate. [*Holding out his hand to* DAISY.] I hope you'll both be very happy.

DAISY. I think I'm going to like you.

GEORGE. Good-bye, Harry, old man.

HARRY. I shall see you later on in the club, sha'n't I?

GEORGE. If I can get through my work.

[*He goes out.*

HARRY. What have you and George been talking about?

DAISY. We discussed the house. It'll be great fun buying the things for it.

HARRY. I could have killed that old Chink for keeping me so long. I grudge every minute that I spend away from you.

DAISY. It's nice to be loved.

HARRY. You do love me a little, don't you?

DAISY. A little more than a little, my lamb.

HARRY. I wish I were more worth your while. You've made me feel so dissatisfied with myself. I'm such a rotter.

DAISY. You're not going to disagree with me already.

HARRY. What about?

DAISY. About you. I think you're a perfect duck.

[*The* AMAH *appears.*

HARRY. Hulloa, who's this?

DAISY. Oh, it's my amah.

HARRY. I didn't recognize her for a moment.

DAISY. She doesn't approve of my being alone with strange gentlemen. She looks after me as if I was a child of ten.

AMAH. Velly late, missy Daisy. Time you come along.

HARRY. Oh, nonsense.

DAISY. She wants me to go and be fitted. She never lets me go out in Peking alone.

HARRY. She's quite right.

DAISY. Amah, come and be introduced to the gentleman. He's going to be your master now.

AMAH. [*Smiling, with little nods.*] Velly nice gentleman. You keep missy Daisy old amah—yes? Velly good amah—yes?

DAISY. She's been with me ever since I was a child.

HARRY. Of course we'll keep her. She was with you when you were in Singapore?

DAISY. [*With a little sigh.*] Yes, I don't know what I should have done without her sometimes.

HARRY. Oh, Daisy, I do want to make you forget all the unhappiness you have suffered.

[*He takes her in his arms and kisses her on the lips. The* AMAH *chuckles to herself silently.*

END OF SCENE II.

SCENE III

SCENE III

SCENE: *The Temple of Fidelity and Virtuous Inclination. The courtyard of the temple is shown. At the back is the sanctuary in which is seen the altar table; on this are two large vases in each of which are seven lotus flowers, gilt but discoloured by incense, and in the middle there is a sand-box in which are burning joss-sticks; behind is the image of Buddha. The sanctuary can be closed by huge doors. These are now open. A flight of steps leads up to it.*

A service is finishing. The monks are seen on each side of the altar kneeling in two rows. They are clad in grey gowns and their heads are shaven. They sing the invocation to Buddha, repeating the same words over and over again in a monotonous chaunt. DAISY *stands outside the sanctuary door, on the steps, listlessly. The* AMAH *is squatting by her side. Now the service ends; the monks form a procession and two by two, still singing, come down the steps and go out. A tiny acolyte blows out the oil lamps and with an effort shuts the temple doors.*

DAISY *comes down the steps and sits on one of the lower ones. She is dreadfully bored.*

AMAH. What is the matter with my pletty one?

DAISY. What should be the matter?

AMAH. [*With a snigger.*] Hi, hi. Old amah got velly good eyes in her head.

DAISY. [*As though talking to herself.*] I've got a husband who adores me and a nice house to live in. I've got a position and as much money as I want. I'm safe. I'm respectable. I ought to be happy.

AMAH. I say, Harry no good, what for you wanchee marry? You say, I wanchee marry, I wanchee marry? Well, you married. What you want now?

DAISY. They say life is short. Good God, how long the days are.

AMAH. You want pony—Harry give you pony. You want jade ring—Harry give you jade ring. You want sable coat—Harry give you sable coat. Why you not happy?

DAISY. I never said I wasn't happy.

AMAH. Hi, hi.

DAISY. If you laugh like that I'll kill you.

AMAH. You no kill old amah. You want old amah. I got something velly pletty for my little Daisy flower.

DAISY. Don't be an old fool. I'm not a child any more. [*Desperately.*] I'm growing older, older, older. And every day is just like every other day. I might as well be dead.

AMAH. Look this pletty present old amah have got.

[*She takes a jade necklace out of her sleeve and puts it, smiling, into* DAISY'S *hand.*

DAISY. [*With sudden vivacity.*] Oh, what a lovely chain. It's beautiful jade. How much do they want for it?

AMAH. It's a present for my little Daisy.

DAISY. For me? It must have cost five hundred dollars. Who is it from?

AMAH. To-day is my little Daisy's wedding-day. She have married one year. Perhaps old amah want to give her little flower present.

DAISY. YOU! Have you ever given me anything but a beating?

AMAH. Lee Tai Cheng pay me necklace and say you give to Daisy.

DAISY. You old hag. [*She flings the necklace away violently.*]

AMAH. You silly. Worth plenty money. You no wanchee, I sell rich Amelican.

[*She is just going after the necklace, when* DAISY *catches her violently by the arm.*

DAISY. How dare you? How dare you? I told you that you were never to let Lee Tai speak to you again.

AMAH. You very angry, Daisy. You very angry before, but you go back to Lee Tai; he think perhaps you go back again.

DAISY. Tell him that I loathe the sight of him. Tell him that if I were starving I wouldn't take a penny from him. Tell him that if he dares to come round here I'll have him beaten till he screams.

AMAH. Hi, hi.

DAISY. And you leave me alone, will you. Harry hates you. I've only got to say a word and he'll kick you out in five minutes.

AMAH. What would my little Daisy do without old amah, hi, hi? What for you no talkee true? You think old amah no got eyes? [*With a cunning, arch look.*] I got something make you very glad. [*She takes a note out of her sleeve.*]

DAISY. What's that?

AMAH. I got letter.

DAISY. [*Snatching it from her.*] Give it me. How dare you hide it?

AMAH. Have come when you long Harry. I think perhaps you no wanchee read when Harry there. [DAISY *tears it open.*] What he say?

DAISY. [*Reading.*] "I'm awfully sorry I can't dine with you on Thursday, but I'm engaged. I've just remembered it's your wedding-day and I'll look in for a minute. Ask Harry if he'd like to ride with me."

AMAH. Is that all?

DAISY. "Yours ever. George Conway."

AMAH. You love him very much, George Conway?

DAISY. [*Taking no notice of her, passionately.*] At last. I haven't seen him for ten days. Ten mortal days. Oh, I want him. I want him.

AMAH. Why you no talkee old amah?

DAISY. [*Desperately.*] I can't help myself. Oh, I love him so. What shall I do? I can't live without him. If you don't want me to die make him love me.

AMAH. You see, you want old amah.

DAISY. Oh, I'm so unhappy. I think I shall go mad.

AMAH. Sh, sh. Perhaps he love you too.

DAISY. Never. He hates me. Why does he avoid me? He never comes here. At first he was always looking in. He used to come out and dine two or three days a week. What have I done to him? He only comes now because he does not want to offend Harry. Harry, Harry, what do I care for Harry?

AMAH. Sh. Don't let him see. Give amah the letter.

[*She snatches it from* DAISY *and hides it in her dress as* HARRY *comes in.* DAISY *pulls herself together.*

HARRY. I say, Daisy, I've just had the ponies saddled. Put on your habit and let's go for a ride.

DAISY. I've got a headache.

HARRY. Oh, my poor child. Why don't you lie down?

DAISY. I thought I was better in the air. But there's no reason why you shouldn't ride.

HARRY. Oh, no, I won't ride without you.

DAISY. Why on earth not? It'll do you good. You know when my head's bad I only want to be left alone. Your pony wants exercising.

HARRY. The boy can do that.

DAISY. [*Trying to conceal her growing exasperation.*] Please do as I ask. I'd rather you went.

HARRY. [*Laughing.*] Of course if you're so anxious to get rid of me . . .

DAISY. [*Smiling.*] I can't bear that you should be done out of your ride. If you won't go alone you'll just force me to come with you.

HARRY. I'll go. Give me a kiss before I do. [*She puts up her lips to his.*] I'm almost ashamed of myself, I'm just as madly in love with you as the day we were married.

DAISY. You are a dear. Have a nice ride, and when you come back I shall be all right.

HARRY. That's ripping. I shan't be very long.

[*He goes out. The lightness, the smile, with which she has spoken to Harry disappear as he goes, and she looks worried and anxious.*

DAISY. Supposing they meet?

AMAH. No can. Harry go out back way.

DAISY. Yes, I suppose he will. I wish he'd be quick. [*Violently.*] I *must* see George.

AMAH. [*Picking up the necklace.*) Velly pletty necklace. You silly girl. Why you no take?

DAISY. Oh, damn, why can't you leave me alone? [*Listening.*] What on earth is Harry doing? I thought the pony was saddled.

AMAH. [*Looking at the necklace.*] What shall I do with this?

DAISY. Throw it in the dust-bin.

AMAH. Lee Tai no likee that very much.

DAISY. [*Hearing the sound of the pony, with a sigh of relief.*] He's gone. Now I'm safe. Where's my bag? [*She takes a little mirror out of it and looks at herself.*] I look perfectly hideous.

AMAH. Don't be silly. You velly pletty girl.

DAISY. [*Her ears all alert.*] There's someone riding along.

AMAH. That not pony. That Peking cart.

DAISY. You old fool, I tell you it's a pony. At last. Oh, my heart's beating so. . . . It's stopping at the gate. It's George. Oh, I love him. I love him. [*To the* AMAH, *stamping her foot.*] What are you waiting for? I don't want you here now, and don't listen, d'you hear. Get out, get out.

AMAH. All-light. My go away.

[*The* AMAH *slinks away.* DAISY *stands waiting for* GEORGE, *holding her hands to her heart as though to stop the anguish of its beating. She makes a great effort at self-control as* GEORGE *enters. He is in riding kit. He has a bunch of orchids in his hand.*

GEORGE. Hulloa, what are you doing here?

DAISY. I was tired of sitting in the drawing-room.

GEORGE. I remembered it was your wedding-day. I've brought you a few flowers. [*She takes them with both hands.*]

DAISY. Thank you. That *is* kind of you.

GEORGE. [*Gravely.*] I hope you'll always be very happy. I hope you'll allow me to say how grateful I am that you've given Harry so much happiness.

DAISY. You're very solemn. One would almost think you'd prepared that pretty speech beforehand.

GEORGE. [*Trying to take it lightly.*] I'm sorry if it didn't sound natural. I can promise you it was sincere.

DAISY. Shall we sit down?

GEORGE. I think we ought to go for our ride while the light lasts. I'll come in and have a drink on the way back.

DAISY. Harry's out.

GEORGE. Is he? I sent you a note this morning. I said I couldn't dine on Thursday and I'd come and fetch Harry for a ride this afternoon.

DAISY. I didn't tell him.

GEORGE. No?

DAISY. I don't see you very often nowadays.

GEORGE. There's an awful lot of work to do just now. They lead me a dog's life at the legation.

DAISY. Even at night? At first you used to come and dine with us two or three nights a week.

GEORGE. I can't always be sponging on you. It's positively indecent.

DAISY. We don't know many people. It's not always very lively here. I should have thought if you didn't care to come for my sake you'd have come for Harry's.

GEORGE. I come whenever you ask me.

DAISY. You haven't been here for a month.

GEORGE. It just happens that the last two or three times you've asked me to dine I've been engaged.

DAISY. [*Her voice breaking.*] You promised that we'd be friends. What have I done to turn you against me?

GEORGE. [*His armour pierced by the emotion in her voice.*] Oh, Daisy, don't speak like that.

DAISY. I've tried to do everything I could to please you. If there's anything I do that you don't like, won't you tell me? I promise you I won't do it.

GEORGE. Oh, my dear child, you make me feel such an awful beast.

DAISY. Is it the past that you can't forget?

GEORGE. Good heavens, no, what do I care about the past?

DAISY. I have so few friends. I'm so awfully fond of you, George.

GEORGE. I don't think I've given you much cause to be that.

DAISY. There must be some reason why you won't ever come near me. Why won't you tell me?

GEORGE. Oh, it's absurd, you're making a mountain out of a molehill.

DAISY. You used to be so jolly, and we used to laugh together. I looked forward so much to your coming here. What has changed you?

GEORGE. Nothing has changed me.

DAISY. [*With a passion of despair.*] Oh, I might as well batter my head against a brick wall. How can you be so unkind to me?

GEORGE. For God's sake . . . [*He stops.*] Heaven knows, I don't want to be unkind to you.

DAISY. Then why do you treat me as an outcast? Oh, it's cruel, cruel.

[GEORGE *is excessively distressed. He walks up and down, frowning. He cannot bear to look at* DAISY *and he speaks with hesitation.*

GEORGE. You'll think me an awful rotter, Daisy, but you can't think me more of a rotter than I think myself. I don't know how to say it. It seems such an awful thing to say. I'm so ashamed of myself. I don't suppose two men have ever been greater pals than Harry and I. He's married to you and he's awfully in love with you. And I think you're in love with him. I was only twenty-three when I—first knew you. It's an awful long time ago, isn't it? There are some wounds that never quite heal, you know. Oh, my God, don't you understand? [*His embarrassment, the distraction of his tone, and the way the halting words fall unwillingly from his lips have betrayed the truth to* DAISY. *She does not speak, she does not stir, she looks at him with great shining eyes. She hardly dares to breathe.*] If ever you wanted revenge on me you've got it now. You must see that it's better that I shouldn't come here too often. Forgive me—Goodby.

[*He hurries away with averted face.* DAISY *stands motionless, erect; she is almost transfigured. She draws a long breath.*

DAISY. Oh, God! He loves me.

[*She takes the orchids he has brought her and crushes them to her heart. The* AMAH *appears.*

AMAH. You wantchee buy Manchu dress, Daisy?

DAISY. Go away.

AMAH. Velly cheap. You look see. No likee, no buy.

DAISY. [*Impatiently.*] I'm sick of curio-dealers.

AMAH. Velly pletty Manchu dresses.

[*She draws aside a little and allows a man with a large bundle wrapped up in a blue cotton cloth to come in. He is a Chinese. He is dressed in a long black robe and a round black cap. It is* LEE TAI CHENG. *He is*

big and rather stout. From his smootn and yellow face his black eyes gleam craftily. He lays his bundle on the ground and unties it, showing a pile of gorgeous Manchu dresses. DAISY *has taken no notice of him. Suddenly she sees that a man, with his back turned to her, is there.*

DAISY. [*To the* AMAH.] I told you I wouldn't see the man. Send him away at once.

LEE TAI. [*Turning round, with a sly smile.*] You look see. No likee, no buy.

DAISY. [*With a start of suprise and dismay.*] Lee!

LEE TAI. [*Coming forward coolly.*] Good afternoon, Daisy.

DAISY. [*Recovering herself.*] It's lucky for you I'm in a good temper or I'd have you thrown out by the boys. What have you brought this junk for?

LEE TAI. A curio-dealer can come and go and no one wonders.

AMAH. Lee Tai velly clever man.

DAISY. Give me that chain. [*The* AMAH *takes it out of her sleeve and gives it to her.* DAISY *flings it contemptuously at* LEE TAI's *feet.*] Take it. Pack up your things and go. If you ever dare to show your face here again, I'll tell my husband.

LEE TAI. [*With a chuckle.*] What will you tell him? Don't you be a silly girl, Daisy.

DAISY. What do you want?

LEE TAI. (*Coolly.*] You.

DAISY. Don't you know that I loathe you? You disgust me.

LEE TAI. What do I care? Perhaps if you loved me I shouldn't want you. Your hatred is like a sharp and bitter sauce that tickles my appetite.

DAISY. You beast.

LEE TAI. I like the horror that makes your body tremble when I hold you in my arms. And sometimes the horror turns on a sudden into a wild tempest of passion.

DAISY. You liar.

LEE TAI. Leave this stupid white man. What is he to you?

DAISY. He is my husband.

LEE TAI. It is a year to-day since you were married. What has marriage done for you? You thought when you married a white man you'd become a white woman. Do you think they can look at you and forget? How many white women do you know? How many friends have you got? You're a prisoner. I'll take you to Singapore or Calcutta. Don't you want to amuse yourself? Do you want to go to Europe? I'll take you to Paris. I'll give you more money to spend in a week than your husband earns in a year.

DAISY. I'm very comfortable in Peking, thank you.

LEE TAI. [*Snapping his fingers.*] You don't care that for your husband. He loves you. You despise him. Don't you wish with all your heart that you hadn't married him?

AMAH. He very silly white man. He no likee Daisy's old amah. Perhaps one day he b'long sick. Daisy cry velly much if he die?

DAISY. [*Impatiently.*] Don't be such a fool.

AMAH. Perhaps one day he drink whisky soda. Oh, velly ill, velly ill. What's the matter with me? No sabe. No can stand. Doctor no sabe. Then die. Hi, hi.

DAISY. You silly old woman. Harry's not a Chinaman and he wouldn't call in a Chinese doctor.

LEE TAI. [*With a smile.*] China is a very old and a highly civilized country, Daisy. When anyone is in your way, it's not very difficult to get rid of him.

DAISY. [*Scornfully.*] And do you think I'd let poor Harry be murdered so that I might be free to listen to your generous proposals? You must think I'm a fool if you expect me to risk my neck for that.

LEE TAI. You don't take *any* risk, Daisy. You know nothing.

AMAH. Lee Tai velly clever man, Daisy.

DAISY. I thought so once. Lee Tai, you're a damned fool. Get out.

LEE TAI. Freedom is a very good thing, Daisy.

DAISY. What should I do with it?

LEE TAI. Wouldn't you like to be free now? [*She looks at him sharply. She wonders if it can possibly be that he suspects her passion for George Conway. He meets her glance steadily.*] One day Sen Shi Ming was sitting with his wife looking at a Tang bronze that he had just bought when he heard someone in the street crying for help. Sen Shi was a very brave man and he snatched up a revolver and ran out. Sen Shi forgot that he had cheated his brother out of a house in Hatamen Street or he would have been more prudent. Sen Shi was found by the watchman an hour later with a dagger in his heart. Who killed cock-robin?

AMAH. Hi, hi. Sen Shi velly silly man.

LEE TAI. His brother knew that. They had grown up together. If I heard cries for help outside my house late in the night, I should ask myself who had a grudge against me, and I should make sure the door was bolted. But white men are very brave. White men don't know the Chinese customs. Would you be very sorry if an accident happened to your excellent husband?

DAISY. I wonder what you take me for?

LEE TAI. Why do you pretend to me, Daisy? Do you think I don't know you?

DAISY. The door is a little on the left of you, Lee Tai. Would you give yourself the trouble of walking through it?

LEE TAI. [*With a smile.*] I go, but I come back. Perhaps you'll change your mind.

[*He ties up his bundle and is about to go.* HARRY *enters.*

DAISY. Oh, Harry, you're back very soon!

HARRY. Yes, the pony went lame. Fortunately I hadn't gone far before I noticed it. Who's this?

DAISY. It's a curio-dealer. He has nothing I want. I was just sending him away.

[LEE TAI *takes up his bundle and goes out.*

HARRY. [*Noticing the orchids.*] Someone been sending you flowers?

DAISY. George.

HARRY. Rather nice of him. [*To the* AMAH.] Run along, amah, I want to talk to missy.

AMAH. All light.

HARRY. And don't let me catch you listening round the corner.

AMAH. My no listen. What for I listen?

HARRY. Run along—chop-chop.

AMAH. Can do. [*She goes out.*]

HARRY. [*With a laugh.*] I couldn't give you a greater proof of my affection than consenting to have that old woman around all the time.

DAISY. I don't know why you dislike her. She's devoted to me.

HARRY. That's the only reason I put up with her. She gives me the creeps. I have the impression that she watches every movement I make.

DAISY. Oh, what nonsense!

HARRY. And I've caught her eavesdropping.

DAISY. Was it amah that you wanted to talk to me about?

HARRY. No, I've got something to tell you. How would you like to leave Peking?

DAISY. [*With a start, suddenly off her guard.*] Not at all.

HARRY. I'm afraid it's awfully dull for you here, darling.

DAISY. I don't find it so.

HARRY. You're so dear and sweet. Are you sure you don't say that on my account?

DAISY. I'm very fond of Peking.

HARRY. We've been married a year now. I don't

want to hurt your feelings, darling, but it's no good beating about the bush, and I think it's better to be frank.

DAISY. Surely you can say anything you like to me without hesitation.

HARRY. Things have been a little awkward in a way. The women I used to know before we married left cards on you—

DAISY. Having taken the precaution to discover that I should be out.

HARRY. And you returned those cards and that was the end of it. I asked George what he thought about my taking you to the club to play tennis and he said he thought we'd better not risk it. The result is that you don't know a soul.

DAISY. Have I complained?

HARRY. You've been most awfully decent about it, but I hate to think of your spending day after day entirely by yourself. It can't be good for you to be so much alone.

DAISY. I might have known Mrs. Chuan. She's a white woman.

HARRY. Oh, my dear, she was—heaven knows what she was! She's married to a Chinaman. It's horrible. She's outside the pale.

DAISY. And there's Bertha Raymond. She's very nice, even though she is a Eurasian.

HARRY. I'm sure she's very nice, but we couldn't very well have the Raymonds here and refuse to go to them. Her brother is one of the clerks in my office. I don't want to seem an awful snob . . .

DAISY. You needn't hesitate to say anything about the Eurasians. You can't hate and despise them more than I do.

HARRY. I don't hate and despise them. I think that's odious. But sometimes they're not very tactful. I don't know that I much want one of my clerks to come and slap me on the back in the office and call me old chap.

DAISY. Of course not.

HARRY. The fact is we've been trying to do an impossible thing. It's no good kicking against the pricks. What with the legations and one thing and another Peking's hopeless. We'd far better clear out.

DAISY. But if I don't mind why should you?

HARRY. Well, it's not very nice for me either. It's for my sake just as much as for yours that I'd be glad to go elsewhere. Of course everybody at the club knows I'm married. Some of them ignore it altogether. I don't mind that so much. Some of them ask after you with an exaggerated cordiality which is rather offensive. And every now and then some fool begins to slang the Eurasians and everybody kicks him under the table. Then he remembers about me and goes scarlet. By God, it's hell.

DAISY. [*Sulkily.*] I don't want to leave Peking. I'm very happy here.

HARRY. Well, darling, I've applied for a transfer.

DAISY. [*With sudden indignation.*] Without saying a word to me?

HARRY. I thought you'd be glad. I didn't want to say anything till it was settled.

DAISY. Do you think I am a child to have everything arranged for me without a word? [*Trying to control herself.*] After all, you'd never see George. Surely you don't want to lose sight of your only real friend.

HARRY. I've talked it over with George and he thinks it's the best thing to do.

DAISY. Did he advise you to go?

HARRY. Strongly.

DAISY. [*Violently.*] I won't do it. I won't leave Peking.

HARRY. Why should his advice make the difference?

DAISY. Why? [*She is confused for a moment, but quickly recovers herself.*] I won't let George Conway—or anybody else—decide where I'm to go.

HARRY. Don't be unreasonable, darling.

DAISY. I won't go. I tell you I won't go.

HARRY. Well, I'm afraid you must now. It's all settled. The transfer is decided.

DAISY. [*Bursting into tears.*] Oh, Harry, don't take me away from here. I can't bear it. I want to stay here.

HARRY. Oh, darling, how can you be so silly! You'll have a much better time at one of the outports. You see, there are so few white people there that they can't afford to put on frills. They'll be jolly glad to know us both. We shall lead a normal life and be like everybody else.

DAISY. [*Sulkily.*] Where do you want to go?

HARRY. I've been put in charge of our place at Chung-king.

DAISY. [*Starting up with a cry.*] Chung-king! Of course you'd choose Chung-king.

HARRY. Why, what's wrong with it? Do you know it?

DAISY. No—oh, what am I talking about? I'm all confused. Yes, I was there once when I was a girl. It's a hateful place.

HARRY. Oh, nonsense! The consul's got a charming wife, and there are quite a nice lot of people there.

DAISY. [*Distracted.*] Oh, what shall I do? I'm so unhappy. If you cared for me at all you wouldn't treat me so cruelly. You're ashamed of me. You want to hide me. Why should I bury myself in a hole two thousand miles up the river? I won't go! I won't go! I won't go! [*She bursts into a storm of hysterical weeping.*]

HARRY. [*Trying to take her in his arms.*] Oh, Daisy, for God's sake don't cry. You know I'm not ashamed of you. I love you more than ever. I love you with all my heart.

DAISY. [*Drawing away from him.*] Don't touch me. Leave me alone. I hate you.

HARRY. Don't say that, Daisy. It hurts me frightfully.

DAISY. Oh, go away, go away!

HARRY. [*Seeking to reason with her.*] I can't leave you like this.

DAISY. Go, go, go, go, go! I don't want to see you! Oh, God, what shall I do?

[*She flings herself down on the steps, weeping hysterically.* HARRY, *much distressed, looks at her in perplexity.* *The* AMAH *comes in.*

AMAH. You make missy cly. You velly bad man.

HARRY. What the devil do you want?

AMAH. [*Going up to* DAISY *and stroking her head.*] What thing he talkee my poor little flower? Maskee. He belong velly bad man.

HARRY. Shut up, you old . . . I won't have you talk like that. I've put up with a good deal from you, but if you try to make mischief between Daisy and me, by God, I'll throw you out into the street with my own hands.

AMAH. What thing you do my Daisy? Don't cly, Daisy.

HARRY. Darling, don't be unreasonable.

DAISY. Go away, don't come near me. I hate you.

HARRY. How *can* you say anything so unkind?

DAISY. Send him away. [*She begins to sob again more violently.*]

AMAH. You go away. You no can see she no wanchee you. You come back bimeby. My sabe talk to little flower.

[HARRY *hesitates for a moment. He is harassed by the scene. Then he makes up his mind the best thing is to leave* DAISY *with the* AMAH. *He goes out.* DAISY *raises her head cautiously.*

DAISY. Has he gone?

AMAH. Yes. He go drink whisky soda.

DAISY. Do you know what he wants?

AMAH. What for he tell me no listen? So fashion I sabe he say something I wanchee hear. He wanchee you leave Peking.

DAISY. I won't go.

AMAH. Harry velly silly man. He alla same pig.

You pull thisa way, he pull thata way. If Harry say you go from Peking—you go.

DAISY. Never, never, never!

AMAH. You go away from Peking you never see George anymore.

DAISY. I should die. Oh, I want him! I want him to love me. I want him to hurt me. I want . . . [*In her passion she has dug her hands hard into the* AMAH.]

AMAH. [*Pushing away* DAISY'S *hands.*] Oh!

DAISY. He loves me. That's the only thing that matters. All the rest . . .

AMAH. Harry wanchee you go Chung-king. Missionary ladies like see you again, Daisy. Perhaps they ask you how you like living along Lee Tai Cheng. Perhaps somebody tell Harry.

DAISY. The fool. Of all the places in China he must hit upon Chung-king.

AMAH. You know Harry. If he say go Chung-king, he go. You cly, he velly solly, he all same go.

DAISY. Oh, I know his obstinacy. When he's once made up his mind—[*Contemptuously.*]—he prides himself on his firmness. Oh, what shall I do?

AMAH. I think more better something happen to Harry.

DAISY. No, no, no!

AMAH. What you flightened for? You no do anything. I tell Lee Tai more better something happen to Harry. I say you not velly sorry if Harry die.

DAISY. [*Putting her hands over her ears.*] Be quiet! I won't listen to you.

AMAH. [*Roughly tearing her hands away.*] Don't you be such a big fool, Daisy. You go to Chung-king and Harry know everything. Maybe he kill you.

DAISY. What do I care?

AMAH. You go to Chung-king, you never see George no more. George, he love my little Daisy. When Harry gone—George, he come say . . .

DAISY. Oh, don't tempt me, it's horrible!

AMAH. He put his arms round you and you feel such a little small thing, you hear his heart beat quick, quick against your heart. And he throw back your head and he kiss you. And you think you die, little flower.

DAISY. Oh, I love him, I love him!

AMAH. Hi, hi.

DAISY. [*Thinking of the scene with George.*] He would hardly look at me and his hands were trembling. He was as white as a sheet.

AMAH. [*Persuasively.*] I tell you, Daisy. You no say yes, you no say no. I ask Buddha.

DAISY. [*Frightened.*] What for?

AMAH. If Buddha say yes, I talk with Lee Tai; if Buddha say no, I do nothing. Then you go to Chungking and you never see George any more.

[*The* AMAH *goes up the temple steps and flings open the great doors.* DAISY *watches her with an agony of horror, expectation, and dread. The* AMAH *lights some joss-sticks on the altar, and strikes a deep-toned gong.* HARRY *comes in, followed by* LEE TAI *with his bundle.*

HARRY. [*Anxious to make his peace.*] Daisy, I found this fellow hanging about in the courtyard. I thought I'd like to buy you a Manchu dress that he's got.

DAISY. [*After a moment's reflection, with a change of tone.*] That's very nice of you, Harry.

HARRY. It's a real beauty. You'll look stunning in it.

LEE TAI. [*Showing the dress, speaking in Pidgin English.*] Firs class dless. He belong Manchu plincess. Manchus no got money. No got money, no can chow. Manchus sell velly cheap. You takee, Missy.

[DAISY *and* LEE TAI *exchange glances.* DAISY *is grave and tragic, whereas* LEE TAI *has an ironical glint in his eyes. Meanwhile the* AMAH *has been bowing before the altar. She goes down on her knees and knocks her head on the ground.*

HARRY. What in God's Name is amah doing?

DAISY. She's asking Buddha a question.

HARRY. What question?

DAISY. [*With a shadow of a smile.*] How should I know?

HARRY. What's the idea?

DAISY. Haven't you ever seen the Chinese do it? You see those pieces of wood she's holding in her hands. She's holding them out to the Buddha so that he may see them and she's telling him that he must answer the question. [*Meanwhile the* AMAH, *muttering in a low tone, is seen doing what* DAISY *describes.*] The Buddha smells the incense of the burning joss-sticks, and he's pleased and he listens to what she says.

HARRY. [*Smiling.*] Don't be so absurd, Daisy. One might almost think you believed all this nonsense. Why, you're quite pale.

DAISY. Then she gets up. The pieces of wood are flat on one side and round on the other. She'll lift them above her head and she'll drop them in front of the Buddha. If they fall with the round side uppermost it means yes. [DAISY *has been growing more and more excited as the ceremony proceeds. Now the* AMAH *steps back a little and she raises her arms.* DAISY *gives a shriek and starts to run forward.*] No! no! Stop!

HARRY. [*Instinctively seizing her arms.*] Daisy!

[*At the same moment the* AMAH *has let the pieces of wood fall. She looks at them for an instant and then turns round.*

AMAH. Buddha talkee, can do.

DAISY. [*To* HARRY.] Why did you stop me?

HARRY. Daisy, how can you be so superstitious? What is the result?

DAISY. Amah asked Buddha a question and the answer is yes. [*She puts her hand to her heart for an instant, then looking at* HARRY *she smiles.*] I'm sorry I was silly and unreasonable just now, Harry.

END OF SCENE III

SCENE IV

SCENE IV

The sitting-room in the ANDERSONS' *apartments. At the back are two double doors. The lower part of them is solid, but above they are cut in an intricate trellis. The ceiling is raftered, painted red and decorated with dim, gold dragons; the walls are whitewashed. On them hang Chinese pictures on rolls. Between the doors is a little image of the domestic god, and under it a tiny oil lamp is burning. The furniture is partly Chinese and partly European. There is an English writing-table, but the occasional tables, richly carved, are Chinese. There is a Chinese pallet-bed, covered with bamboo matting, and there is an English Chesterfield. There are a couple of Philippine rattan chairs and one or two of Cantonese blackwood. On the floor is a Chinese carpet. A Ming tile here and there gives a vivid note of colour. It is a summer night and the doors are wide open. Through them you see one of the courtyards of the temple.*

The AMAH *is seated in one of the blackwood chairs by the side of a table. She has her water-pipe. She puts a pinch of tobacco in and then going to the lamp under the image lights a taper. She seats herself again and lights her pipe. She smokes quietly.*

DAISY *comes in. She wears an evening dress somewhat too splendid for dinner with only her husband and a friend.*

AMAH. B. A. T. fellow, when he go?

DAISY. You know his name. Why don't you call him by it? I think he's going almost at once.

AMAH. What for he go so soon?

DAISY. That's his business, isn't it? As a matter of fact his sister is arriving from England, and he has to go to meet her.

AMAH. More better he go soon.

DAISY. Why do you smoke your pipe here? You know Harry doesn't like it.

AMAH. Harry one big fool, I think. When you go to Chung-king?

DAISY. Harry hasn't said a word about it since.

AMAH. You got key that desk?

DAISY. No. Harry keeps all his private papers there.

[*The* AMAH *goes up to the desk and tries one of the drawers. It is locked and she cannot open it.*

AMAH. What Harry do now?

DAISY. He and Mr. Knox are drinking their port.

[*The* AMAH *takes out a skeleton key out of her pocket and inserts it in the lock. She turns the key.*

AMAH. Velly bad lock. I think him made in Germany. Hi, hi. [*She opens the drawer and takes out a revolver. She hands it to* DAISY.] Lee Tai say, you take out cartridges.

DAISY. What do you mean? [*She suddenly guesses the truth and gives a cry.*] Oh!

AMAH. [*Hurriedly putting her hand over* DAISY's *mouth.*] Sh, you no make noise. [*Holding out the revolver.*] Lee Tai say, more better you do it.

DAISY. Take it away. No, no, I won't, I won't.

AMAH. Sh, sh. I do it. I sabe.

[*She takes the cartridges out of the revolver and hides them about her.* DAISY *looks at her with horror.*

DAISY. It's not for to-night?

AMAH. I no sabe.

DAISY. I won't have it. Do you hear? Oh, I shall go mad!

AMAH. Then Harry shut you up. Hi, hi. All same Chung-king.

[*She puts the revolver back into the drawer and shuts it*

just as HARRY *and* HAROLD KNOX *come in. They wear dinner jackets.*

KNOX. Hulloa, there's the little ray of sunshine. I missed your bonny face before dinner.

AMAH. You velly funny man.

KNOX. No wonder I dote upon you, dearie. You're the only attractive woman I've ever been able to persuade that I was a humourist.

HARRY. [*Catching sight of the* AMAH's *water-pipe.*] I told you I wouldn't have your disgusting pipe in here, amah.

AMAH. Belong velly nice pipe.

HARRY. I swore I'd throw the damned thing out myself if I found it lying about.

AMAH. [*Snatching it away.*] You no touch my pipe. You velly bad man. Velly bad temper. You no Christian.

HARRY. A fat lot you know about Christianity.

AMAH. I know plentything about Christianity. My father velly poor man. He say, you go and be Christian. I go Catholic mission and they baptize me. English Church missionary, he come along and say, Catholic mission no good, you go to hell, I baptize you. All right I say, you baptize me. By and by Baptist missionary come along and say, English Church mission no good, you go to hell, I baptize you. All right, I say, you baptize me. By and by Presbyterian missionary come along and say, Baptist mission no good, you go to hell, I baptize you. All right, I say, you baptize me. [*To* KNOX.] You know Seventh Day Adventists?

KNOX. I've heard of them.

AMAH. By and by Seventh Day Adventist he come along and say, Presbyterian mission no good.

KNOX. You go to hell.

AMAH. How fashion you sabe what he said?

KNOX. I guessed it.

AMAH. You go to hell, he say. I baptize you. I been

baptized one, two, three, four, five times. I velly Christian woman.

HARRY. [*Smiling.*] I apologize.

AMAH. They all say to poor Chinese, love one another. I no think missionaries love one another velly much. Hi, hi.

KNOX. [*Taking out his watch.*] D'you mind if I look at the time? I don't want to get to the station late.

HARRY. Of course not. I say, won't you have a cigar? [*He goes to his desk.*] I have to keep them locked up. I think the boys find them very much to their taste. [*He puts the key into the lock.*] Hulloa, the drawer's open. I could have sworn I locked it. [*He takes out a box of cigars and hands it to* KNOX.]

KNOX. [*Helping himself.*] Thanks very much.

DAISY. You know, you mustn't let me keep you if you want to be off.

KNOX. I've got two or three minutes.

HARRY. Oh, Daisy, before Harold goes I wish you'd show him that Manchu dress I bought you.

DAISY. I'll go and fetch it. [*To the* AMAH.] Is it hanging up in the cupboard?

AMAH. No, I have puttee in paper. I velly careful woman.

[*They both go out.*

KNOX. I say, old man, I hope you don't think I'm an awful swine to rush off like this the moment I've swallowed my dinner.

HARRY. Rather not. As a matter of fact it's not exactly inconvenient, because I'm expecting George. I want him to have a heart to heart talk with Daisy.

KNOX. Oh.

HARRY. She's grousing rather about going to Chungking and I want him to tell her it's a very decent place. He was vice-consul up there once. He's dining at the Carmichael's, but he said he'd come along here as soon as he could get away.

KNOX. Then it's all for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

[DAISY *comes in with the dress.*

DAISY. Here it is.

KNOX. By George, isn't it stunning? I must try to get one for my sister. She'd simply go off her head if she saw that.

DAISY. Harry spoils me, doesn't he?

KNOX. Harry's a very lucky young fellow to have you to spoil.

DAISY. [*Smiling.*] Go away or you'll never arrive in time.

KNOX. I'm off. Goodby and thanks very much. Dinner was top-hole.

DAISY. Goodby.

[*He goes out.* HARRY *accompanies him into the courtyard and for a moment is lost to view. The gaiety on* DAISY'S *face vanishes and a look of anxiety takes its place.*

DAISY. [*Calling hurriedly.*] Amah, amah.

AMAH. [*Coming in.*] What thing?

DAISY. What have you done? Have you . . . ? [*She stops, unable to complete the agonised question.*]

AMAH. What you talk about? I done nothing. I only have joke with you. Hi, hi.

DAISY. Will you swear that's true?

AMAH. Never tell a lie. Velly good Christian.

[DAISY *looks at her searchingly. She does not know whether to believe or not.* HARRY *returns.*

HARRY. I say, Daisy, I wish you'd put on the dress. I'd love to see how you look in it.

DAISY. [*With a smile.*] Shall I?

HARRY. Amah will help you. It'll suit you right down to the ground.

DAISY. Wait a minute. Bring the dress along, amah.

AMAH. All right.

[DAISY *goes out, followed by the* AMAH *with the Manchu*

dress. HARRY *goes to his desk and opens the drawer. He examines the lock and looks at the keyhole.*

HARRY. [*To himself.*] I wonder if that old devil's got a key.

[*He shuts the drawer, but does not lock it. He strolls back to the middle of the room.*

DAISY. [*In the adjoining room.*] Are you getting impatient?

HARRY. Not a bit.

DAISY. I'm just ready.

HARRY. I'm holding my breath. [DAISY *comes in. She is in full Manchu dress. She is strangely changed. There is nothing European about her any more. She is mysterious and enigmatical.*] Daisy! [*She gives him a little smile but does not answer. She stands quite still for him to look at her.*] By George, how Chinese you look!

DAISY. Don't you like it?

HARRY. I don't know. You've just knocked me off my feet. Like it? You're wonderful. In my wildest dreams I never saw you like that. You've brought all the East into the room with you. My head reels as though I were drunk.

DAISY. It's strange that I feel as if these things were made for me. They make me feel so different.

HARRY. I thought that no one in the world was more normal than I. I'm ashamed of myself. You're almost a stranger to me and by God, I feel as though the marrow of my bones were melting. I hear the East a-calling. I have such a pain in my heart. Oh, my pretty, my precious, I love you.

[*He falls down on his knees before her and clasps both his arms round her.*

DAISY. [*In a low voice, hardly her own.*] Why, Harry, what are you talking about?

[*She caresses his hair with her long, delicate Chinese hand.*

HARRY. I'm such a fool. My heart is full of wonderful

thoughts and I can only say that—that I worship the very ground you walk on.

DAISY. Don't kneel, Harry; that isn't the way a woman wants to be loved.

[*She raises him to his feet and as he rises he takes her in his arms.*

HARRY. [*Passionately.*] I'd do anything in the world for you.

DAISY. You could make me so happy if you chose.

HARRY. I do choose.

DAISY. Won't you give up this idea of leaving Peking?

HARRY. But, my darling, it's for your happiness I'm doing it.

DAISY. Don't you think that everyone is the best judge of his own happiness?

HARRY. Not always.

DAISY. [*Disengaging herself from his arms.*] Ah, that's the English way. You want to make people happy in your way and not in theirs. You'll never be satisfied till the Chinese wear Norfolk jackets and eat roast beef and plum pudding.

HARRY. Oh, my dear, don't let's argue now.

DAISY. You say you'll give me everything in the world and you won't give me the one thing I want. What's the good of offering me the moon if I have a nail in my shoe and you won't take it out?

HARRY. Well, you can smile, so it's not very serious, is it?

DAISY. [*Putting her arms round his neck.*] Oh, Harry, I'll love you so much if you'll only do what I ask. You don't know me yet. Oh, Harry!

HARRY. My darling, I love you with all my heart and soul, but when I've once made up my mind nothing on earth is going to make me change it. We can only be happy and natural if we go. You must submit to my judgment.

DAISY. How *can* you be so obstinate?

HARRY. My dear, look at yourself in the glass now.

[*She looks down on her Manchu dress. She understands what he means. She is a Chinese woman.*

DAISY. [*With a change of tone.*] Amah, bring me a tea-gown.

[*She begins to undo the long Manchu coat. The* AMAH *comes in with a tea-gown.*

HARRY. [*Dryly.*] It's very convenient that you should always be within earshot when you're wanted, amah.

AMAH. I velly good amah. Velly Christian woman.

[DAISY *slips off the Manchu clothes and is helped by the* AMAH *into the tea-gown. She wraps it round her. She is once more a white woman.*

DAISY. [*Pointing to the Manchu dress.*] Take those things away. [*To* HARRY.] Would you like to have a game of chess?

HARRY. Very much. I'll get the men.

[DAISY *goes to the gramaphone and turns on a Chinese tune. It is strange and exotic. Its monotony exacerbates the nerves.* HARRY *gets the chessboard and sets up the pieces. They sit down opposite one another. The* AMAH *has disappeared with the discarded dress.*

HARRY. Will you take white?

DAISY. If you like. [*She moves a piece.*]

HARRY. I hate your queen opening. It always flummoxes me. I don't know where you learned to play so well. I never have a chance against you.

DAISY. I was taught by a Chinaman. It's a game they take to naturally.

[*They make two or three moves without a word. Suddenly, breaking across the silence, stridently, there is a shriek outside in the street.* DAISY *gives a little gasp.*

HARRY. Hulloa, what's that?

DAISY. Oh, it's nothing. It's only some Chinese quarrelling.

[*Two or three shouts are heard and then an agonised cry of "Help, help."* HARRY *springs to his feet.*

HARRY. By God, that's English.

[*He is just going to rush out when Daisy seizes his arm.*]

DAISY. What are you going to do? No, no, don't leave me, Harry.

[*She clings to him. He pushes her away violently.*

HARRY. Shut up. Don't be a fool.

[*He runs to the drawer of his desk. The cry is repeated: "For God's sake, help, help, oh!"*

HARRY. My God, they're killing someone. It can't be . . . [*He remembers that George is coming that evening.*]

DAISY. [*Throwing herself on him.*] No, Harry, don't go, don't go, I won't let you.

HARRY. Get out of my way.

[*He pushes her violently aside and runs out.* DAISY *sinks to the floor and buries her face in her hands.*

DAISY. Oh, my God!

[*The* AMAH *has been waiting just outside one of the doors, in the courtyard, and now she slips in.*

AMAH. Harry velly blave man. He hear white man being murdered. He run and help. Hi, hi.

DAISY. Oh, I can't. Harry, Harry.

[*She springs to her feet and runs towards the courtyard, with some instinctive idea of going to her husband's help. The* AMAH *stops her.*

AMAH. What side you go?

DAISY. I can't stand here and let Harry be murdered.

AMAH. You stop here.

DAISY. Let me go. For God's sake let me go. Wu, Wu.

[*The* AMAH *puts her hand over* DAISY'S *mouth.*

AMAH. You be quiet. You wanchee go prison?

DAISY. [*Snatching away her hand.*] I'll give you anything in the world if you'll only let me go.

AMAH. You silly little fool, Daisy.

[DAISY *struggles to release herself, but she is helpless in the* AMAH'S *grasp.*

DAISY. [*In an agony.*] It'll be too late.

AMAH. Too late now. You no can help him.

[*She releases* DAISY. DAISY *staggers forward and covers her face with her hands.*

DAISY. Oh, what have I done?

AMAH. [*With a snigger.*] You no done nothing, you know nothing.

DAISY. [*Violently.*] Curse you! It's you, you, you!

AMAH. I velly wicked woman. Curse me. Do me no harm.

DAISY. I told you I wouldn't have anything done to Harry.

AMAH. You say no with your lips but in your belly you say yes.

DAISY. No, no, no!

AMAH. You just big damned fool, Daisy. You no love Harry. Him not velly rich. Not velly big man. No good. You velly glad you finish with him.

DAISY. But not that way. He never did me any harm. He was always good to me and kind to me.

AMAH. That velly good way. Velly safe way.

DAISY. You devil! I hate the sight of you.

AMAH. What for you hate me? I do what you want. Your father velly clever man. He say: no break eggs, no can eat omelette.

DAISY. I wish I'd never been born.

AMAH. [*Impatiently.*] What for you tell me lies? You want Harry dead. Well, I kill him for you. [*With a sudden gust of anger.*] You no curse me or I beat you. You velly bad girl.

DAISY. [*Giving way.*] Oh, I feel so awfully faint!

AMAH. [*Tenderly, as though* DAISY *were still a child.*] You sit down. You take smelly salts. [*She helps* DAISY *into a chair and holds smelling salts to her nostrils.*] You feel better in a minute. Amah love her little Daisy flower. Harry him die and Daisy velly sorry. She cry and cry and cry. George velly sorry for Daisy. By and

by Daisy no cry any more. She say, more better Harry dead. Good old amah, she do everything for little Daisy.

[DAISY *has been looking at her with terrified eyes.*

DAISY. What a brute I am! I'd give anything in the world to have Harry back, and yet in the bottom of my heart there's a feeling—if I were free there'd be nothing to stand between George and me.

AMAH. I think George he marry you maybe.

DAISY. Oh, not now! It'll bring me bad joss.

AMAH. You no wanchee fear, my little flower. You sit still or you feel bad again.

DAISY. [*Jumping up.*] How can I sit still? The suspense is awful. Oh, my God, what's happened?

AMAH. [*With a cunning smile.*] I tell you what's happened. Harry run outside and he see two, three men makee fighting. They a little way off. One man cry, "Help, help!" Harry give shout and run. He fall down and him not get up again.

DAISY. He's as strong as a horse. With his bare hands he's a match for ten Chinamen.

AMAH. Lee Tai velly clever man. He no take risks. I think all finish now.

DAISY. Then for God's sake let me go.

AMAH. More better you stay here, Daisy. Perhaps you get into trouble if you go out. They ask you why you go out,—why you think something happen to your husband.

DAISY. I can't let him lie there.

AMAH. He no lie velly long. By and by night watchman come here, and he say white man in the street—him dead. I think his throat cut.

DAISY. Oh, how horrible! Harry, Harry!

[*She buries her face in her hands.*

AMAH. I light joss-stick. Make everything come all right.

[*She goes over to the household image and lights a joss-*

stick in front of it. She bows before it and going on her knees knocks her head on the ground.

DAISY. How long is it going on? How long have I got to wait? Oh, what have I done? The silence is awful. [*There is a silence. Suddenly* DAISY *breaks out into a shriek.*] No, no, no! I won't have it. I can't bear it. Oh, God help me! [*In the distance of the next courtyard is heard the chanting of the monks at the evening service. The* AMAH, *having finished her devotions, stands at the doorway looking out steadily.* DAISY *stares straight in front of her. Suddenly there is a loud booming of a gong.* DAISY *starts up.*] What's that?

AMAH. Be quiet, Daisy. Be careful.

[*The door of the courtyard is flung open.* HARRY *comes in, through the courtyard, into the room, pushing before him a coolie whom he holds by the wrists and by the scruff of the neck.*

DAISY. Harry!

HARRY. I've got one of the blighters. [*Shouting.*] Here, bring me a rope.

DAISY. What's happened?

HARRY. Wait a minute. Thank God, I got there when I did. [WU *brings a rope and* HARRY *ties the man's wrists behind his back.*] Keep quiet, you devil, or I'll break your ruddy neck. [*He slips the rope through the great iron ring of one of the doors and ties it so that the man cannot get away.*] He'll be all right there for the present. I'll just go and telephone to the police station. Wu, you stand outside there. You watch him. Sabe?

WU. I sabe.

[*As* HARRY *goes out a crowd of people surge through the great open doorway of the courtyard. They are monks of the temple, attracted to the street by the quick rumour of accident, coolies, and the night watchman with his rattle. Some of them bear Chinese lanterns, some hurricane lamps. The crowd separates out as they approach the room and then it is seen that*

three men are bearing what seems to be the body of a man.

DAISY. What's that?

AMAH. I think belong foreign man. [*The men bring in the body and lay it on the sofa. The head and part of the chest are covered with a piece of blue cotton.* DAISY *and the* AMAH *look at it with dismay. They dare not approach. The* ABBOT *drives the crowd out of the room and shuts the doors, only leaving that side of one open at which the prisoner is attached. The* AMAH *turns on the god in the niche.*] You say can do. What for you make mistake?

[*She seizes a fan which is on the table under her hand and with angry violence hits the image on the face two or three times.* DAISY *has been staring at the body. She goes up to it softly and lifts the cloth slightly, she gives a start, and with a quick gesture snatches it away. She sees George Conway.*

DAISY. George. [*She opens her mouth to shriek.*]

AMAH. Sh, take care. Harry hear.

DAISY. What have you done?

AMAH. I do nothing. Buddha, he makee mistake.

DAISY. You fiend!

AMAH. How do I know, Daisy? I no can tell George coming here to-night. [*The words come gurgling out, for* DAISY *has sprung upon her and seized her by the throat.*] Oh, let me go.

DAISY. You fiend.

[HARRY *comes in. He is astounded at what he sees.*

HARRY. Daisy, Daisy. What in God's name are you doing?

[*Restrained by his voice,* DAISY *releases her hold of the* AMAH, *but violently, pushing her so that she falls to the ground. She lies there, putting her hand to her throat.* DAISY *turns to* HARRY.

DAISY. It's George.

HARRY. [*Going up to the sofa and putting his hand on George's heart.*] Confound it, I know it's George.

DAISY. Is he dead?

HARRY. No, he's only had a bang on the head. He's stunned. I've sent for the doctor. Luckily he was dining at the Carmichaels' and I sent George's rickshaw to bring him along as quick as he could come.

DAISY. Supposing he's gone?

HARRY. He won't have gone. They were going to play poker. By God, what's this? [*He takes away his hand and sees blood upon it.*] He's been wounded. He's bleeding.

[DAISY *goes up to the body and kneeling down, feels the pulse.*

DAISY. Are you sure he's alive?

HARRY. Yes, his heart's beating all right. I wish the doctor would make haste. I don't know what one ought to do.

DAISY. How do you know he's at the Carmichaels'?

HARRY. George told me yesterday he was going to be there. George said he did not want to play poker and he'd come along here after dinner.

DAISY. [*Springing to her feet.*] Did you know George was coming?

HARRY. Of course I did. When I heard someone shouting in English the first thing I thought of was George.

[DAISY *bursts into a scream of hysterical laughter. The* AMAH *suddenly looks up and becomes attentive.*

HARRY. Daisy, what's the matter?

AMAH. [*Sliding to her feet and going up to Daisy, trying to stop her.*] Maskee. She only laughy laughy. You no trouble.

HARRY. Get some water or something.

AMAH. [*Frightened.*] Now, my pletty, my pletty.

DAISY. [*Recovering herself, violently.*] Let me be.

HARRY. By George, I believe he's coming to. Bring the water here.

[DAISY *takes the glass and leaning over the sofa, moistens* GEORGE'S *lips. He slowly opens his eyes.*

GEORGE. Funny stuff. What is it?

HARRY. [*With a chuckle that is half a sob.*] Don't be a fool. Oh, George, you have given me a nasty turn.

GEORGE. There's something the matter with the water.

DAISY. [*Looking at it quickly.*] What?

GEORGE. Damn it all, there's no brandy in it.

DAISY. If you make a joke I shall cry.

[*He tries to move, but suddenly gives a groan.*

GEORGE. Oh Lord. I've got such a pain in my side.

HARRY. Keep quiet. The doctor will be here in a minute.

GEORGE. What is it?

HARRY. I don't know. There's a lot of blood.

GEORGE. I hope I haven't made a mess on your nice new sofa.

HARRY. Damn the sofa. It's lucky I heard you shout.

GEORGE. I never shouted.

HARRY. Oh, nonsense, I heard you. I thought it was you at once.

GEORGE. I heard a cry for help too. I was just coming along. I nipped out of my rickshaw and sprinted like hell. I saw some fellows struggling. I think someone hit me on the head. I don't remember much.

HARRY. Who did cry for help?

GEORGE. [*After a pause.*] Nobody.

HARRY. But I heard it. Daisy heard it too. It sounded like someone being murdered. [*As* GEORGE *gives a little chuckle.*] What's the joke?

GEORGE. Someone's got his knife into you, old man, and the silly ass stuck it into me instead.

[*The* AMAH *pricks up her ears.*

DAISY. I'm sure you oughtn't to talk so much.

GEORGE. It's a very old Chinese trick. They just got the wrong man, that's all.

HARRY. By George, that explains why I tripped.

GEORGE. Did you trip? A piece of string across the street.

HARRY. I wasn't expecting it. I went down like a ninepin. I was up again in a flash and just threw myself at the blighters. You should have seen 'em scatter. Luckily I got one of them.

GEORGE. Good. Where is he?

HARRY. He's here. I've tied him up pretty tight.

GEORGE. Well, we shall find out who's at the bottom of this. The methods of the Chinese police may be uncivilized, but they are . . . Oh, Lord, I do feel rotten.

HARRY. Oh, George.

[DAISY *gives* HARRY *the glass and he helps* GEORGE *to drink.*

GEORGE. That's better.

HARRY. We'd better get you to bed, old man.

GEORGE. All right.

HARRY. Wu and I will carry you. Wu, come along here.

[*The boy approaches. The* AMAH *realizes that for a moment the prisoner is to be left unguarded. There is a table knife on one of the occasional tables with which* DAISY *has been cutting a book. The* AMAH'S *hand closes over it.*

GEORGE. Oh, no, that's all right. I can walk.

[*He gets up from the sofa.* HARRY *gives him an arm. He staggers.*

HARRY. Wu, you fool. [DAISY *springs forward.*] No, let me take him, Daisy. You're not strong enough.

GEORGE. [*Gasping.*] Sorry to make such an ass of myself.

[HARRY *and* WU, *holding him one on each side, help him out of the room.*

DAISY. Shall I come?

HARRY. Oh, I'll call you if you're wanted.

[DAISY *sinks into a chair, shuddering, and covers her face with her hands. The* AMAH *seizes her oppor-*

tunity. She cuts the rope which binds the prisoner. As soon as he is free he steps out into the darkness. The AMAH *watches for a moment and then cries out.*

AMAH. Help, help!

[DAISY *springs up and* HARRY *hurries in.*

HARRY. What's the matter?

AMAH. Coolie. Him run away.

HARRY. [*Looking at the place where he had been tied up.*] By God!

AMAH. Missy feel velly ill. No can stand blood. Feel faint. I run fetch smelly salts and when I come back him gone. Him bad man.

[HARRY *goes to the door and looks at the rope.*

HARRY. This rope's been cut.

AMAH. Perhaps he have knife. Why you no look see before you tie him.

HARRY. [*Looking at her sternly.*] How do you think he could get at a knife with his hands tied behind his back?

AMAH. I no sabe. Maybe he have friend.

HARRY. Didn't you hear anything, Daisy?

DAISY. No. I wasn't thinking about him. Oh, Harry, George isn't going to die, is he?

HARRY. I hope not. I don't know what sort of a wound he's got. [*The* AMAH, *thinking attention is withdrawn from her, is slipping away.*] No, you don't. You stop here.

AMAH. What thing you wantchee?

HARRY. You let that man go.

AMAH. You velly silly man. What for I want let him go?

HARRY. [*Pointing.*] What's that knife doing there? That's one of our knives.

AMAH. Missy takey knife cutty book.

HARRY. When I got into the street I wanted to fire my revolver to frighten them. There wasn't a cartridge in it. I always keep it loaded and locked up.

AMAH. Revolver. I don't know him. I never have see revolver. Never. Never.

[*She makes a movement as though to go away. He seizes her wrist.*

HARRY. Stop.

AMAH. My go chow. My belong velly hungly. You talk by and by.

HARRY. If I hadn't come in just now, Daisy would have strangled you.

AMAH. Daisy velly excited. She no sabe what she do. She never hurt old amah.

HARRY. Why were you angry with her, Daisy?

DAISY. [*Frightened.*] I was beside myself. I don't know what I was doing.

HARRY. [*With sudden suspicion.*] Are you trying to shield her?

DAISY. Of course not. Why on earth should I do that?

HARRY. I suppose you look on it as a matter of no importance that she tried to kill me.

DAISY. Oh, Harry, how can you say anything so cruel? Why should she try and kill you?

HARRY. I don't know. How do you expect me to guess what is at the back of a Chinese brain? She's hated me always.

AMAH. You no love me velly much.

HARRY. I've put up with her just because she was attached to you. I knew she was a liar and a thief. It was a trap and I escaped by a miracle. Only, George has got to suffer for it.

DAISY. Harry, you're nervous and excited.

HARRY. What are you defending her for?

DAISY. I'm not defending her.

HARRY. One would almost think she had some hold on you. I've never seen anyone let an amah behave as you let her behave.

DAISY. She's been with me since I was a child. She—she can't get it into her head that I'm grown up.

HARRY. Well, I've had about enough of her. [*To the* AMAH.] The police will be here in ten minutes and I shall give you in charge instead of the man you allowed to escape.

AMAH. You give me policeman? I no have do wrong. What for you send me to prison?

HARRY. I daresay you know what a Chinese prison is like better than I do. I don't think it'll be long before you find it worth while to tell the truth.

DAISY. [*With increasing nervousness.*] Oh, Harry, I don't think you ought to do anything before you've had time to think. After all, there's absolutely no proof.

HARRY. [*Looking at her with perplexity.*] I don't understand. What is the mystery?

DAISY. There is no mystery. Only I can't bear the idea that my old amah should go to prison. She's been almost a mother to me for so many years.

[*There is a pause.* HARRY *looks from* DAISY *to the* AMAH.

HARRY. [*To the* AMAH.] Then get out of here before the police come.

AMAH. You talkee so quick. No can understand.

HARRY. Yes, you can. Unless you're out of here in ten minutes I shall give you in charge . . . Go while the going's good.

AMAH. I think I go smoke pipe.

HARRY. No, you don't, you get out quick or I'll throw you out myself.

AMAH. You no throw me out and I no go to prison.

HARRY. We'll soon see about that.

[*He seizes her roughly and is about to run her out into the courtyard.*

DAISY. No, don't, Harry. She's my mother.

HARRY. That!

[*He is aghast. He releases the* AMAH. *He looks at her with horror.* DAISY *covers her face with her hands. The* AMAH *gives a little snigger.*

AMAH. Yes, Daisy, my daughter. She no wanchee tell. I think she a little ashamed of her mother.

HARRY. My God!

AMAH. I velly pletty girl long time ago. Daisy's father, he call me his little lotus flower, he call me his little peach-blossom. By and by I no velly pletty girl any more and Daisy's father he call me you old witch. Witch, that's what he call me. Witch. He call me, you old hag. You velly bad man, I say to him. You no Christian. You go to hell, he say. All right, I say, you baptize me.

[HARRY *turns away, with dismay, and repulsion. The* AMAH *takes her pipe and lights it.*

END OF SCENE IV

SCENE V

SCENE V

The courtyard in the ANDERSONS' *part of the temple. At the back is the outer wall raised by two or three steps from the ground. From the top of the wall, projects a shallow roof of yellow tiles supported by wooden pillars painted red, shabby and rather weather-worn, and this roof is raised in the middle of the wall, where there is a huge wooden gateway. When this is opened the street is seen and on the other side of it a high, blank, white wall. The courtyard is paved with great flags. On each side of it are living rooms.*

There is a long rattan chair; a round table and a couple of armchairs. GEORGE *is lying on the long chair, looking at an illustrated paper, and the* AMAH *is seated on the ground, smoking her water-pipe.*

GEORGE. [*With a smile, putting down the paper.*] You're not as chatty as usual this afternoon, amah.

AMAH. Suppose I got nothing to talk about I no talk.

GEORGE. You are an example to your sex, amah. Your price is above rubies.

AMAH. No likee rubies velly much. No can sell velly much money.

GEORGE. In point of fact I wasn't thinking of giving you rubies, even reconstructed, but if I did I can't think you'd be so indelicate as to sell them.

AMAH. I no think you velly funny man.

GEORGE. I was afraid you didn't. Would you think it funny if I sat on my hat?

AMAH. Yes, I laugh then. Hi, hi.

GEORGE. The inscrutable heart of China expands to the self-same joke that convulses a duchess in London and a financier in New York.

AMAH. You more better read the paper.

GEORGE. Where's Missy?

AMAH. I think she in her room. You wanchee?

GEORGE. No.

AMAH. I think she come by and by.

GEORGE. [*Looking at his watch.*] Mr. Anderson ought to be back from the office soon. [*There is a loud knocking at the door.*] Hulloa, who's that?

[*A* SERVANT *comes out of the house and going to the gateway withdraws the bolt.*

AMAH. I think doctor come see you, maybe.

GEORGE. Oh no, he's not coming to-day. He said he'd look in to-morrow before I started.

[*The* AMAH *gets up and looks at the doorway of which now the* SERVANT *has opened one side.* HAROLD KNOX *and his sister* SYLVIA *are seen.*

KNOX. May we come in?

GEORGE. Good man. Of course.

[*They come towards* GEORGE. SYLVIA *is a very pretty, simple, healthy, and attractive girl. She is dressed in a light summer frock. There is in her gait and manner something so spring-like and fresh that it is a pleasure to look at her.*

KNOX. I've brought my young sister along with me. [*As* GEORGE *rises to his feet.*] Don't get up. You needn't put on any frills for a chit like that.

GEORGE. Nonsense. I'm perfectly well. [*Shaking hands with* SYLVIA.] How d'you do? My name is Conway.

KNOX. I only omitted to inform her of that fact because she already knew it.

SYLVIA. Strangely enough that happens to be true. But I wish you'd lie down again.

GEORGE. I'm sick of lying down. The doctor says I'm perfectly all right. I'm going home to-morrow.

KNOX. [*Catching sight of the* AMAH.] Hulloa, sweetheart, I didn't see you. Sylvia, I want you to know the only woman I've ever loved.

GEORGE. [*Smiling.*] This is Mrs. Anderson's amah.

SYLVIA. [*With a little friendly nod.*] How do you do?

AMAH. [*All in a breath.*] Velly well, thank you. How do you do? Velly well, thank you . . . You Mr. Knox sister?

SYLVIA. Yes.

AMAH. You missionary lady?

SYLVIA. No.

AMAH. What for you come China then?

SYLVIA. I came to see my brother.

AMAH. How old are you?

KNOX. Be truthful, Sylvia.

SYLVIA. I'm twenty-two.

AMAH. How many children you got?

SYLVIA. I'm not married.

AMAH. What for you no married if you twenty-two?

SYLVIA. It does need an explanation, doesn't it? The truth is that nobody's asked me.

KNOX. What a lie!

AMAH. You come China catchee husband?

SYLVIA. Certainly not.

AMAH. You Christian?

SYLVIA. Not a very good one, I'm afraid.

AMAH. Who baptized you?

SYLVIA. Well, you know, it's an awfully long time ago. I forget.

KNOX. She's like me, amah, she's a Presbyterian.

AMAH. You go to hell then. Only Seventh Day Adventists no go to hell.

SYLVIA. It'll be rather crowded then, I'm afraid.

AMAH. You only baptized once?

SYLVIA. So far as I know.

AMAH. I baptized one, two, three, four, five times. I velly Christian woman.

KNOX. I say, old man, I don't want to dash your fond hopes, but in point of fact we didn't come here to see you.

GEORGE. Why not? Surely Miss Knox must want to see the principal sights of Peking.

KNOX. The man is not a raving lunatic, Sylvia. His only delusion is that he's a humourist . . . Sylvia thought she'd like to call on Mrs. Harry.

GEORGE. I'm sure Daisy will be very glad. Amah, go and tell Missy that there's a lady.

AMAH. Can do.

[*Exit.*

KNOX. I say, have they caught any of those blighters who tried to kill you?

GEORGE. No, not a chance. They weren't after me, you know; they were after Harry.

KNOX. Is there anyone who has a grudge against him?

GEORGE. I don't think so. He doesn't seem very keen on discussing the incident.

[DAISY *comes in.*

KNOX. Here she is. I've brought my sister to see you, Mrs. Harry.

DAISY. [*Shaking hands.*] How do you do?

SYLVIA. What a wonderful place you live in!

DAISY. It's rather attractive, isn't it? You must see the temple before you go.

SYLVIA. I'd love to.

DAISY. Do sit down. [*To* KNOX.] What do you think of my patient?

KNOX. I think he's a fraud. I never saw anyone look so robust.

DAISY. [*Delighted.*] He's made a wonderful recovery.

GEORGE. Thanks to you, Daisy. You can't think how she nursed me.

KNOX. It was rather a narrow escape, wasn't it?

DAISY. For two days we thought he might die at any minute. It was—it was rather dreadful.

GEORGE. And do you know, all that time she never left me a minute. [*To* DAISY.] I don't know how I can ever thank you.

DAISY. Oh, well, Harry had his work. I didn't think he ought to be robbed of his night's rest for a worthless creature like you, and I hated the idea of a paid nurse looking after you.

SYLVIA. You must have been worn out at the end of it.

DAISY. No, I'm as strong as a horse. And it was such a relief to me when the doctor said he was out of danger, I forgot I was tired.

KNOX. I don't know why you bothered about him. There are such a lot of fellows who want his job and they all know they could do it much better than he can.

GEORGE. Everyone's been so extraordinarily good to me. I had no idea there was so much kindness in the world.

DAISY. [*To* SYLVIA, *very pleasantly.*] Will you come and look at the temple now while they're bringing tea?

SYLVIA. Yes, I'd like to very much.

DAISY. I think you'll enjoy your tea more if you feel you've done the sight.

SYLVIA. It's all so new to me. Everything interests me. I've fallen passionately in love with Peking.

[*They wander off, talking gaily.*

GEORGE. Harold, you're a very nice boy.

KNOX. That's what the girls tell me. But I don't know why you should.

GEORGE. I think it was rather sporting of you to bring your sister to see Daisy.

KNOX. I don't deserve any credit for that. She insisted on coming.

GEORGE. Oh?

KNOX. She met Harry at the club and took rather a fancy to him. When I told her Daisy was a half-caste and people didn't bother much about her she got right up on her hind legs. I told her she'd only just come out to China and didn't know what she was talking about and then she gave me what she called a bit of her mind. I was obliged to remark that if that was a bit I didn't much care about knowing the rest.

GEORGE. It sounds as though you'd had a little tiff.

KNOX. She said she had no patience with the airs people gave themselves in the East. A Eurasian was just as good as anybody else. And when I happened to say I was coming here to-day to see how you were she said she'd come too.

GEORGE. It's very kind of her. Daisy leads a dreadfully lonely life. It would mean so much to her if she knew one or two white women. If they take to one another, you won't try to crab it, will you? I fancy Daisy wants a friend rather badly.

KNOX. I shouldn't like it very much, you know. Would you much care for your sister to be very pally with a half-caste?

GEORGE. Daisy is one in a thousand. You can't think what she's done for me during my illness. My mother couldn't have taken more care of me.

KNOX. They're often very good-hearted. But as a matter of fact nothing I can say will have the least effect on Sylvia. Girls have changed a lot since the war. If she wants to do a thing and she thinks it right, she'll do it. And if I try to interfere she's quite capable of telling me to go to the devil.

GEORGE. She seems to be a young woman of some character.

KNOX. Perhaps because she's had rather a rough time. The fellow she was engaged to was killed in the war and she was awfully cut up. She drove an ambulance for the last two years and then she went up to Girton. After that my father thought she'd better come out here for a bit.

GEORGE. She ought to like it.

KNOX. If she doesn't put up people's backs too much. She can't stand anything like injustice or cruelty. If she thinks people are unkind to Daisy or sniffy about her, she'll stick to her like a leech. However, I daresay she'll get married.

GEORGE. [*Smiling.*] That'll learn her.

KNOX. Why don't you marry her? It's about time you settled down.

GEORGE. [*With a chuckle.*] You fool.

KNOX. Why? You're by way of being rather eligible, aren't you?

GEORGE. I don't know why you want to get rid of her. She seems a very nice sister.

KNOX. Of course I love having her with me, but she does cramp my style a bit. And she ought to marry. She'd make you a first-rate wife.

GEORGE. Much too good for the likes of me.

KNOX. Of course she's a bit independent, but one has to put up with that in girls nowadays. And she's as good as gold.

GEORGE. One can see that at a mile, my son.

KNOX. I say, who was Rathbone, Daisy's first husband, do you know?

GEORGE. [*His face a blank.*] Harry told me he was an American. He said he was in business in the F. M. S.

KNOX. That's what Harry told me. I met a fellow the other day who lives in Singapore who told me he'd never heard of Rathbone.

GEORGE. [*Chaffing him.*] Perhaps he didn't move in the exalted circles that a friend of yours would naturally move in.

KNOX. I suppose there was a Mr. Rathbone?

[*There is a distant sound in the street of Chinese instruments being played.*

GEORGE. Hulloa, there's the procession coming along.

KNOX. What procession?

GEORGE. It's a Manchu wedding. The amah was talking about it this morning.

KNOX. I must call Sylvia. She'd love to see it. Sylvia.

[DAISY *and* SYLVIA *come out of the house just as he calls.*

SYLVIA. Don't shout, Harold.

KNOX. Come along and have your education improved. A Manchu wedding is just going to pass by . . .

SYLVIA. Oh, good, let's go out into the street!

DAISY. You can see it just as well from here. I'll have the doors opened. Boy, open the gate.

KNOX. Yes, that's the ticket. We shall see it better from here.

[WU *during the last few speeches has appeared with the tea, which he sets down on the table. On receiving* DAISY'S *order he goes to the doorway and draws the bolt. He pulls back one heavy door while* KNOX *pulls back the other. The empty street is seen. The music grows louder. Now the procession comes, gay, brilliant, and barbaric against the white wall of the street; first men on horseback, then Buddhist monks in gray, with their shaven heads; then the band, playing wild, discordant music; after them passes a long string of retainers in red, with strange shaped hats; then come retainers bearing in open palanquins great masses of cardboard fruits and all manner of foodstuffs, silver vessels and gold; these are followed by two or three youths on horseback, gorgeously dressed, and these again by the palanquin, carved and richly painted and gilt, of the bride. Then pass more priests and another band and finally a last string of retainers in red. When the last one has disappeared a beggar shows himself at the open doorway. He is excessively thin, and he has a bush of long, bristly hair; he is clothed in pale rags, torn and patched; his legs and feet are bare. He puts out a bony hand and breaks into a long, high-pitched whine.*

KNOX. Oh, Lord, get out!

DAISY. Oh, no, please, Harold, give him a copper or two.

GEORGE. Daisy never lets a beggar go away without something.

DAISY. It's not because I'm charitable. I'm afraid they'll bring me bad luck.

KNOX. [*Taking a coin from his pocket.*] Here you are, Clarence. Now buzz off.

[*The beggar takes his dole and saunters away.* WU *closes the doors.*

SYLVIA. [*Enthusiastically.*] I *am* glad I saw that.

DAISY. You'll get very tired of that sort of thing before you've been here long. Now let's have tea.

SYLVIA. Oh, I don't think we'll stay, thank you very much. We have another call to make.

DAISY. How tiresome of you. Harry ought to be back in a few minutes. He'll be disappointed not to have seen you.

SYLVIA. I promised to go and see Mrs. Stopfort. Do you know her?

DAISY. I know who you mean.

SYLVIA. I think people are being absolutely beastly to her. It simply makes my blood boil.

DAISY. Oh, how?

SYLVIA. Well, you know that her husband's a drunken brute who's treated her abominably for years. At last she fell in love with a man and now her husband is going to divorce her. It's monstrous that he should be able to.

DAISY. Are the ladies of Peking giving her the cold shoulder?

KNOX. The cold *shoulder* hardly describes it. The frozen silverside.

GEORGE. I think she's well rid of Reggie Stopfort at any price, but I'm sorry the other party is André Leroux.

SYLVIA. Why? She introduced me to him. I thought he was a very nice fellow.

GEORGE. Well, you see, if he'd been English or American, he would have married her as a matter of course.

SYLVIA. So I should hope.

DAISY. Because she was divorced on his account, you mean?

GEORGE. Yes. But the French haven't our feeling on

that matter. I'm not quite sure if André will be willing to marry her.

SYLVIA. Oh, that would be dreadful! Under those circumstances the man must marry the woman. He simply must.

GEORGE. Of course.

KNOX. Come along, Sylvia. We won't discuss women's rights now.

SYLVIA. [*Giving* DAISY *her hand very cordially.*] And if there's anything I hate it's people who say they're going and then don't go. Good-bye, Mrs. Anderson.

DAISY. It's been very nice to see you.

SYLVIA. I do hope you'll come and see me soon. I'm so very much alone you'd be doing me a charity if you'd look me up. We might do the curio shops together.

DAISY. That would be great fun.

SYLVIA. Good-bye, Mr. Conway. I'm glad to see you so well.

GEORGE. Thank you very much, good-bye.

[KNOX *and* SYLVIA *go out.* DAISY *has walked with them towards the doorway and now returns to* GEORGE.

GEORGE. What a very nice girl, Daisy.

DAISY. She seems to make a specialty of speckled peaches. First me and then Mrs. Stopfort.

GEORGE. I was hoping you'd like her.

DAISY. It's hardly probable. She's everything that I'm not. She has everything that I haven't. No, I don't like her. But I'd give anything in the world to be her.

GEORGE. [*Smiling.*] I don't think you need envy her.

DAISY. Don't you think she's pretty?

GEORGE. Yes, very. But you're so much more than pretty. I expect you have more brains in your little finger than she has in her whole body.

DAISY. [*Gravely.*] She has something that I haven't got, George, and I'd give my soul to have.

GEORGE. [*Embarrassed.*] I don't know what you

mean. [*Changing the conversation abruptly.*] Daisy, now that I'm going away . . .

DAISY. [*Interrupting.*] Are you really going to-morrow?

GEORGE. [*Breezily.*] I'm quite well. I'm ashamed to have stayed so long.

DAISY. I don't look forward very much to the long, empty days when you're no longer here.

GEORGE. [*Seriously.*] I must go, Daisy. I really must.

DAISY. [*After a moment's pause.*] What were you going to say to me? Don't thank me for anything I may have done. It's given me a happiness I never knew before.

GEORGE. Except for you I should have died. And when I think of the past I am ashamed.

DAISY. What does the past matter? The past is dead and gone.

GEORGE. And I'm ashamed when I think how patient you were when I was irritable, how kind and thoughtful. I hardly knew I wanted a thing before you gave it to me. Sometimes when I felt I couldn't breathe, the tenderness of your hand on my forehead—oh, it was like a dip in a highland stream on a summer day. I think I never knew that there was in you the most precious thing that anyone can have, goodness. Oh, Daisy, it makes me feel so humble.

DAISY. Goodness? [*With the shadow of a laugh.*] Oh, George.

GEORGE. It's because Harry is better and simpler than I am that he was able to see it in you. He felt it in you always and he was right.

[*The* AMAH *comes in.*

DAISY. [*Sharply.*] What d'you want?

[*The* AMAH *crosses from one to the other and a thin smile crosses her eyes.*

AMAH. Master telephone, Daisy.

DAISY. Why didn't you take the message?

[*She is about to go into the house.*

AMAH. He have go now. He say very much hurry. I say no can findee you. I think you go out.

DAISY. Why did you say that?

AMAH. I think more better, maybe.

GEORGE. [*Smiling.*] That's right, amah. Never tell the truth when a lie will do as well.

DAISY. Well, what was the message?

AMAH. Master say he must to go Tientsin. Very important business. No come back to-night. Come back first train to-morrow.

DAISY. Very well. Tell the boy that we shall be only two to dinner.

AMAH. I go talkee he.

[*Exit.*

GEORGE. [*Urbanely.*] I say, I don't want to be an awful trouble to you. I think I'd better go back to my own place to-night.

DAISY. [*Looking at him.*] Why should you do that?

GEORGE. I was going to-morrow anyway.

DAISY. Do you think my reputation is such a sensitive flower?

GEORGE. [*Lightly.*] Of course not. But people aren't very charitable. It seems rather funny I should stay here when Harry's away.

DAISY. What do you suppose I care if people gossip?

GEORGE. I care for you.

DAISY. [*With a smile, almost archly.*] It's not very flattering to me that you should insist on going the moment Harry does. Do I bore you so much as all that?

GEORGE. [*With a chuckle.*] How can you talk such nonsense? I haven't wanted to get well too quickly. I've so enjoyed sitting quietly here while you read or sewed. I've got so much in the habit of seeing you about me that if I don't go at once I shall never be able to bring myself to go at all.

DAISY. Since that horrible accident I've been rather

nervous at the thought of sleeping here by myself. I'm terrified at the thought of being left alone to-night.

GEORGE. Come in with me, then. The Knoxes will be delighted to put you up for the night.

DAISY. [*With a sudden change of manner.*] I don't want you to go, George. I want you to stay.

GEORGE. [*As serious as she is.*] Daisy, don't be too hard on me. You don't know. You don't know. [*With an effort he regains his self-control and returns to his easy, chaffing tone.*] Don't forget it's not only a wound in the lung that I've been suffering from. While you and the doctor between you have been patching that up, I've been busy sticking together the pieces of a broken heart. It's nicely set now, no one could tell that there'd ever been anything wrong with it, but I don't think it would be very wise to give it a sudden jolt or jerk.

DAISY. [*In a low quivering voice.*] Why do you say things like that? What is the good of making pretences?

GEORGE. [*Determined to keep the note of lightness.*] It was very silly of me to bother you with my little troubles. It was very hot. I was overworked and nervous at the time or I shouldn't have made so much of it. I'm sure that you'll be as pleased as I am to know that I'm making a very good recovery, thank you.

DAISY. [*As though asking a casual question.*] You don't care for me any more?

GEORGE. I have the greatest affection for you. I admire you and of course I'm grateful to you. But if I thought I was in love with you I was mistaken.

DAISY. Do you know why I wouldn't have a professional nurse and when you were unconscious for two days refused to leave you for a minute? Do you know why, afterwards, at night when you grew delirious I wouldn't let Harry watch you? I said it would interfere with his work. I dared not leave you for a single moment. And it was your secret and mine. I wouldn't let anybody in

the world share it with me. Do you know what you said in your delirium?

GEORGE. [*Disturbed.*] I expect I talked an awful lot of rot. People always do, I believe.

DAISY. [*Passionately.*] You used to call me, "Daisy, Daisy," as though your heart was breaking. And when I leaned over you and said: "I'm here," you would take my face in your hands so that I could hardly believe you weren't conscious. And you said: "I love you."

GEORGE. Oh, God!

DAISY. And sometimes I didn't know how to calm you. You were frantic because you thought they were taking me away from you. "I can't bear it," you said, "I shall die." I had to put my hands over your mouth so that no one should hear.

GEORGE. I didn't know what I was saying. I wasn't myself. It was just the madness of the fever.

DAISY. And sometimes you were so exquisitely tender. Your voice was soft and caressing. And you called me by sweet names so that the tears ran down my cheeks. You thought you held me in your arms and you pressed me to your heart. You were happy then; you were so happy that I was afraid you'd die of it. I know what love is and you love me.

GEORGE. For God's sake, stop. Why do you torture me?

DAISY. And then you were madly jealous. You hated Harry. I think you could have killed him.

GEORGE. That's not true. That's infamous. Never. Never.

DAISY. Oh, you can say that with your lips! Sometimes you thought he put his arms round me and kissed me and you sobbed aloud. Oh, it was so painful. I forgot that you were unconscious and I took your hands and said: "He's not here. You and I are alone, alone, alone." And sometimes I think you understood. You fell back. And a look of peace came on your face as if you were in heaven

and you said—do you know what you said? You said: "Beloved, beloved, beloved."

[*Her voice breaks and the tears course down her cheeks.* GEORGE *is shattered by what she has told him.*

GEORGE. I suppose there are few of us that wouldn't turn away from ourselves in horror if the innermost thoughts of our heart, the thoughts we're only conscious of to hate, were laid bare. But that shameful thing that showed itself in me isn't me. I disown it . . .

DAISY. I thought you had more courage. I thought you had more sense. Do you call that you, a few conventional prejudices? The real you is the love that consumes you more hotly than ever the fever did. The only you is the you that loves me. The rest is only frills. It's a domino that you put on at a masked ball.

GEORGE. You don't know what you say. Frills? It's honour, and duty, and decency. It's everything that makes it possible for me to cling to the shadow of my self-respect.

DAISY. Oh, all that means nothing. You fool. You might as well try with your bare hands to stop the flow of the Yangtze.

GEORGE. If I perish I perish. Oh, of course I love you. All night I'm tortured with love and tortured with jealousy, but the day does come at last and then I can get hold of myself again. My love is some horrible thing gnawing at my heart-strings. I hate it and despise it. But I can fight it, fight it all the time. Oh, I've been here too long. I ought to have got back to work long ago. Work is my only chance. Daisy, I beseech you to let me go.

DAISY. How can I let you go? I love you.

GEORGE. [*Thunderstruck.*] You? [*Impatiently, with a shrug of the shoulders.*] Oh, you're talking nonsense.

DAISY. Why do you suppose I've said all these things? Do you think a woman cares twopence for a man's love when she doesn't love him?

GEORGE. Oh, it's impossible. You don't know what

you're saying. I know how good and kind you are. You've been touched by my love. You mistake pity for love.

DAISY. I'm not good and I'm not kind. There's no room in my soul for pity. In my soul there's only a raging hunger. If I know what you feel it's because I feel it too. I love you, I love you, I love you.

GEORGE. And Harry?

DAISY. What do I care about Harry? I hate him because he's stood between me and you.

GEORGE. He is your husband. He is my friend.

DAISY. He doesn't exist. I've loved you always from the first day I saw you. The others were nothing to me, Lee Tai and Harry and the rest. I've loved you always. I've never loved anyone but you. All these years I've kept the letters you wrote to me. I've read them till I know every word by heart. They're all blurred and smudged with the tears I've wept over them. They were all I had. Do you think I'm going to let you go now? All my pain, all my anguish, are nothing any more. I love you and you love me.

GEORGE. Oh, don't, don't!

DAISY. You can't leave me now. If you leave me I shall kill myself.

GEORGE. I must go away. I must never see you again. Whatever happens we must never meet.

DAISY. [*Exasperated and impatient.*] That's impossible. What will you say to Harry?

GEORGE. If need be I'll tell him the truth.

DAISY. What difference will that make? Will you love me any the less? Yes, tell him. Tell him that I love you and you only and that I belong to you and to you only.

GEORGE. Oh, Daisy, for God's sake try and control yourself. We must do our duty, we must, we must.

DAISY. I know no duty. I only know love. There's no room in my soul for anything else. You say that love is like a wild beast gnawing at your entrails. My love is

a liberator. It's freed me from a hateful past. It's freed me from Harry. There's nothing in the world now but you and me and the love that joins us. I want you, I want you.

GEORGE. Don't, don't! Oh, this is madness! There's only one thing to be done. God, give me strength. Daisy, you know I love you. I love you with all my heart and soul. But it's good-bye. I'll never see you again. Never. Never. So help me God.

DAISY. How can you be so cruel? You're heartless. I've wanted you all these years. I've hungered for you. You don't know what my humiliation has been. Pity me because I loved you. If you leave me now I shall die. You open the doors of heaven to me and then you slam them in my face. Haven't you made me unhappy enough? You'd have done better to kill me ten years ago. You trampled me in the mud and then you left me. Oh, what shall I do? [*She sinks down to the ground, weeping as though her heart would break.* GEORGE *looks at her for a minute, his face distorted with agony; he clenches his hands in the violence of his effort to control himself. He takes his hat and walks slowly towards the gate. He withdraws the bolt that holds it. When* DAISY *hears the sound of this she starts to her feet and staggers towards him.*] George. No, no. Not yet.

[*She staggers and with a cry falls headlong. She has fainted.*

GEORGE. [*Rushing towards her.*] Daisy. Daisy. [*He kneels down and takes her head in his hands. He is fearfully agitated.*] Oh, my darling, what is it? Oh, my God! Daisy! Speak to me. [*Calling.*] Amah, amah! [DAISY *slowly opens her eyes.*] Oh, my beloved! I thought you were dead.

DAISY. Lift me up.

GEORGE. You can't stand.

[*He raises her to her feet so that when she is erect she is in his arms. She puts her arms round his neck.*

DAISY. Don't leave me.

GEORGE. My precious. My beloved.

[*She turns her face to him, offering her lips, and he bends his head and kisses her. She closes her eyes in ecstasy.*

DAISY. Take me in. I feel so ill.

GEORGE. I'll carry you.

[*He lifts her up and carries her into the house. From the opposite side the* AMAH *appears. She goes to the gateway and slips the bolt forward into position. Then she comes to the tea-table, sits down and takes a scone.*

AMAH. Hi, hi.

[*She bites the scone and chews placidly. On her face is a smirk of irony.*

END OF SCENE V

SCENE VI

SCENE VI

A small room in a Chinese house in Peking.

The walls are whitewashed, but the whitewash is not a little stained. Three or four scrolls hang on them, written over in large characters with inscriptions. On the floor is matting. The only furniture consists of a table, with a couple of chairs, a wooden pallet covered with matting, with cushions at one end of it, and a Korean chest heavily ornamented with brass. At the back are two windows, elaborately latticed and covered with rice paper, and a lightly carved door.

DAISY *is seated in one of the chairs. She has taken her pocket mirror out of her bag and is looking at herself. She is gay and happy. The* AMAH *comes in. She carries a long-necked vase in which are a couple of carnations.*

AMAH. I bring you flowers make room look pletty.

DAISY. Oh, you nice old thing! Put them on the table.

AMAH. You look at yourself in looking-glass?

DAISY. I'm looking young. It suits me to be happy.

AMAH. You very pletty girl. I very pletty girl long time ago. You look alla same me some day.

DAISY. [*Amused.*] Heaven forbid.

AMAH. You velly good temper to-day, Daisy. You glad because George come.

DAISY. I didn't see him yesterday.

AMAH. He keep you waiting.

DAISY. The wretch. He always keeps me waiting. But what do I care as long as he comes? We shall have three hours. Perhaps he'll dine here. If he says he can,

give him what he likes to eat. No one can make such delicious things as you can if you want to.

AMAH. You try flatter me.

DAISY. I don't. You know very well you're the best cook in China.

AMAH. [*Tickled.*] Oh, Daisy! I know you more better than you think.

DAISY. You're a wicked old woman. [*She gives her a kiss on both cheeks.*] What are they making such a row about next door?

AMAH. Coolie, he got killed this morning. He have two small children. Their mother, she die long time ago.

DAISY. How dreadful! Poor little things.

AMAH. You like see them. They here.

[*She goes to the door and beckons. A little, old, shabby Chinaman comes in with two tiny children, a boy and a girl, one holding on to each hand. They are very solemn and shy and silent.*

DAISY. Oh, what lambs!

AMAH. They no got money. This old man he say he take them and he bring them up. But he only coolie. He no got much money himself.

DAISY. Is he related to them?

AMAH. No, him just velly good man. He no can do velly much. He just do what he can. The neighbours, they help little.

DAISY. But I'll help too. Have you got any money on you?

AMAH. I got two, three dollars.

DAISY. What's the good of that? Let him have this.

[*She has a chain of gold beads round her neck. She takes it off and puts it in the old man's hands.*

AMAH. That chain very ispensive, Daisy.

DAISY. What do I care? Let him sell it for what it'll fetch. It'll bring me luck. [*To the old man.*] You sabe?

[*He nods, smiling.*

AMAH. I think he understand all right.

DAISY. [*Looking at the children.*] Aren't they sweet? And so solemn. [*To the* AMAH.] You go chop-chop to the toy shop opposite and buy them some toys.

AMAH. Can do.

[*She goes out.* DAISY *takes the children and sets them up on the table.*

DAISY. [*Charmingly.*] Now you come and talk to me. Sit very still now or you'll fall off. [*To the little boy.*] I wonder how old you are. [*To the old man.*] Wu? Liu?

OLD MAN. Liu.

DAISY. [*To the little boy.*] Six years old. Good gracious, you're quite a man. If I had a little boy he'd be older than you now. If I had a little boy I'd dress him in such smart things. And I'd bath him myself. I wouldn't let any horrid old amah bath him. And I wouldn't stuff him up with sweets like the Chinese do; I'd give him one piece of chocolate when he was a good boy. Gracious me, I've got some chocolates here. Wait there. Sit quite still. [*She goes over to the shelf on which is a bag of chocolates.*] There's one for you and one for you and (*to the old man*) one for you. And here's one for me.

[*The children and the Chinaman eat the chocolates solemnly. The* AMAH *returns with a doll and a child's Peking cart.*

AMAH. Have catchee toys.

DAISY. Look what kind old amah has brought you. [*She lifts the children off the table and gives the doll to the little girl and the cart to the boy.*] Here's a beautiful doll for you and here's a real cart for you. [*She sits down on the floor.*] Look, the wheels go round and everything.

AMAH. Have got more presents.

[*She takes out of her sleeve little bladders with mouthpiece attached so that they can be blown up.*

DAISY. What on earth is this? Oh, I love them! We must all have one. [*She distributes them and they all blow*

them up. There is the sound of scratching at the door.] Who's that, I wonder?

AMAH. If you say come in, perhaps you see.

DAISY. Open the door, you old silly. [*She begins to blow up the balloon again. The* AMAH *goes to the door and opens it.* LEE TAI *steps in.*] Lee Tai. Send these away. [*The* AMAH *makes a sign to the old Chinaman, he gives each child a hand and with their presents they go out. The* AMAH *slips out after them.*] I thought you were dead.

LEE TAI. I'm very much alive, thank you.

DAISY. Ah, well, we'll hope for the best.

LEE TAI. I trust you're not displeased to see me.

DAISY. [*Gaily.*] If you'd come yesterday I should certainly have smacked your face, but to-day I'm in such a good humour that even the sight of you is tolerable.

LEE TAI. You weren't here yesterday.

[*The* AMAH *comes in carrying on a little wooden tray two Chinese bowls and a tea-pot.*

DAISY. My dear Mamma seems to think you've come to pay me a visit. You mustn't let me keep you too long.

LEE TAI. You are expecting someone? I know.

[*The* AMAH *goes out.*

DAISY. [*Chaffing him.*] I always said you had a brain.

LEE TAI. No better a one than yours, Daisy. It was a clever trick when you got me to try to put your husband out of the way so that you should be free for George Conway.

DAISY. It was nothing to do with me. I told you I'd have nothing to do with it. You made a hash of it. One can forgive the good for being stupid, but when rascals are fools there's no excuse.

LEE TAI. The best laid schemes of mice and men, as my favourite poet Robert Burns so elegantly puts it, gang aft agley.

DAISY. I don't care a damn about your favourite poet. What have you come here for to-day?

LEE TAI. As it turns out I do not see that there is any

cause for regret that George Conway got the knife thrust that was intended for your husband. I wish it had gone a little deeper.

DAISY. [*Coolly.*] As it turns out you only did me a service. But still you haven't told me to what I owe the honour of your visit.

LEE TAI. Civility. I like to be on friendly terms with my tenants.

DAISY. [*Surprised.*] Your what?

LEE TAI. [*Urbanely.*] This happens to be my house. When I discovered that your honourable mother had taken the rooms in this courtyard so that you might have a place where George Conway and you could safely meet I thought I would buy the whole house.

DAISY. I hope it was a good investment.

LEE TAI. Otherwise perhaps I should have hesitated. It was clever of you to find so convenient a place. With a curio shop in front into which anyone can be seen going without remark and an ill-lit passage leading to this court, it is perfect.

DAISY. What is the idea?

LEE TAI. [*With a twinkle in his eyes.*] Are you a little frightened?

DAISY. Not a bit. What can you do? You can tell Harry. Tell him.

LEE TAI. [*Affably.*] George Conway would be ruined.

DAISY. [*With a shrug.*] He'd lose his job. Perhaps you would give him another. You're mixed up in so many concerns you could surely find use for a white man who speaks Chinese as well as George does.

LEE TAI. I find even your shamelessness attractive.

DAISY. I'm profoundly grateful for the compliment.

LEE TAI. But do not fear. I shall do nothing. I bought this house because I like you to know that always, always you are in my hand. Where you go, I go. Where you are, I am. Sometimes you do not see me, but nevertheless I am close. I do nothing. I am content to wait.

DAISY. Your time is your own. I have no objection to your wasting it.

LEE TAI. One day, and I think that day is not very far distant, you will come to me. I was the first and I shall be the last. If you like I will marry you.

DAISY. [*With a smile.*] I thought you had two, if not three, wives already. I fancy that number four would have rather a thin time.

LEE TAI. My wife can be divorced. I am willing to marry you before the British Consul. We will go to Penang. I have a house there. You shall have motor cars.

DAISY. It's astonishing how easy it is to resist temptations that don't tempt you.

LEE TAI. Sneer. What do I care? I wait . . . What have you to do with white men? You are not a white woman. What power has this blood of your father's when it is mingled with the tumultuous stream which you have inherited through your mother from innumerable generations? Our race is very pure and very strong. Strange nations have overrun us, but in a little while we have absorbed them so that no trace of a foreign people is left in us. China is like the Yangtze, which is fed by five hundred streams and yet remains unchanged, the river of golden sand, majestic, turbulent, indifferent, and everlasting. What power have you to swim against that mighty current? You can wear European clothes and eat European food, but in your heart you are a Chinawoman. Are your passions the weak and vacillating passions of the white man? There is in your heart a simplicity which the white man can never fathom and a deviousness which he can never understand. Your soul is like a rice patch cleared in the middle of the jungle. All around the jungle hovers, watchful and jealous, and it is only by ceaseless labour that you can prevent its inroads. One day your labour will be vain and the jungle will take back its own. China is closing in on you.

DAISY. My poor Lee Tai, you're talking perfect nonsense.

LEE TAI. You're restless and unhappy and dissatisfied because you're struggling against instincts which were implanted in your breast when the white man was a hungry, naked savage. One day you will surrender. You will cast off the white woman like an outworn garment. You will come back to China as a tired child comes back to his mother. And in the immemorial usages of our great race you will find peace.

[*There is a moment's silence.* DAISY *passes her hand over her forehead. Against her will she is strangely impressed by what* LEE TAI *has said. She gives a little shudder and recovers herself.*

DAISY. George Conway loves me, and I— Oh!

LEE TAI. The white man's love lasts no longer than a summer day. It is a red, red rose. Now it flaunts its scented beauty proudly in the sun and to-morrow its petals, wrinkled and stinking, lie scattered on the ground.

[*There is a sound of a footstep in the courtyard outside.*

DAISY. Here he is. Go quickly.

[GEORGE *opens the door and stops as he catches sight of* LEE TAI.

GEORGE. Hulloa, who's this?

[LEE TAI *steps forward, smiling and obsequious.*

LEE TAI. I am the owner of this house. The amah complained that the roof leaked and I came to see for myself.

GEORGE. [*Frowning.*] It's of no consequence. Please don't bother about it.

LEE TAI. I wish I needn't. The amah has a virulent and active tongue—I am afraid she will give me no peace till I have satisfied her outrageous demands.

GEORGE. You speak extraordinarily good English.

LEE TAI. I am a graduate of the University of Edinburgh.

DAISY. Robert Burns is his favourite poet.

LEE TAI. I spent a year at Oxford and another at Harvard. I can express myself in English not without fluency.

GEORGE. Let me compliment you on your good sense in retaining your national costume. I think it a pity that the returned students should insist on wearing ugly tweed suits and billycock hats.

LEE TAI. I spent eight years abroad. I brought back with me no more admiration for Western dress than for Western civilization.

GEORGE. That is very interesting.

LEE TAI. You are pleased to be sarcastic.

GEORGE. And you, I think, are somewhat supercilious. Believe me, the time has passed when the mandarins of your country, in their impenetrable self-conceit, could put up a barrier against the advance of civilization. If you have any love for China you must see that her only chance to take her rightful place in the world is to accept honestly and sincerely the teaching of the West.

LEE TAI. And if in our hearts we despise and detest what you have to teach us? For what reason are you so confident that you are so superior to us that it behooves us to sit humbly at your feet? Have you excelled us in arts or letters? Have our thinkers been less profound than yours? Has our civilization been less elaborate, less complicated, less refined than yours? Why, when you lived in caves and clothed yourselves with skins we were a cultured people. Do you know that we tried an experiment which is unique in the world?

GEORGE. [*Good-naturedly.*] What experiment is that?

LEE TAI. We sought to rule this great people not by force, but by wisdom. And for centuries we succeeded. Then why does the white man despise the yellow? Shall I tell you?

GEORGE. Do.

LEE TAI. [*With a smiling contempt.*] Because he has invented the machine-gun. That is your superiority.

We are a defenceless horde and you can blow us into eternity. [*With a tinge of sadness.*] You have shattered the dream of our philosophers that the world could be governed by the power of law and order . . . And now you are teaching our young men your secret. You have thrust your hideous inventions upon us. Fools. Do you not know that we have a genius for mechanics? Do you not know that there are in this country four hundred millions of the most practical and industrious people in the world? Do you think it will take us long to learn? And what will become of your superiority when the yellow man can make as good guns as the white and fire them as straight? You have appealed to the machine-gun and by the machine-gun shall you be judged.

[*There is a pause. Suddenly* GEORGE *gives* LEE TAI *a scrutinizing glance.*

GEORGE. What is your name?

LEE TAI. [*With a thin, amused smile.*] Lee Tai Cheng.

GEORGE. [*With a frigid politeness.*] I'm sure you are very busy, Mr. Lee. I won't detain you any longer.

LEE TAI. [*Still smiling.*] I wish you a good day.

[*He bows slightly and shakes his own hands in the Chinese manner. He goes out. He leaves behind him an impression that is at once ironic and sinister.*

GEORGE. What the devil is he doing here?

DAISY. [*Amused.*] He came to make me an offer of marriage. I pointed out to him that I was married already.

GEORGE. [*Not without irritation.*] How did he know you were here?

DAISY. He made it his business to find out.

GEORGE. Does he know that . . . ?

DAISY. [*Coolly.*] You know China better than most Englishmen. You know that the white man can do nothing without the Chinese knowing it. But they won't tell other white men unless—unless it's to their advantage to do so.

GEORGE. You told me that this house belonged to the amah.

DAISY. [*Smiling.*] That was a slight exaggeration.

GEORGE. You put it very mildly.

DAISY. You said you wouldn't come to the temple. It meant finding some place where we could meet or never seeing you at all.

GEORGE. [*Sombrely.*] We began with deceit and with deceit we've continued.

DAISY. [*Tenderly.*] There's no deceit in my love, George. After all, our love is the only thing that matters.

GEORGE. [*With a certain awkwardness.*] I'm afraid I've kept you waiting. André Leroux came to see me just as I was leaving the Legation.

DAISY. [*Remembering.*] I know. Mrs. Stopfort's young man.

GEORGE. He said he knew Mrs. Stopfort's friends were rather anxious about her future and he wanted them to know that he was going to marry her as soon as she was free.

DAISY. Oh!

GEORGE. Of course it's the only decent thing to do, but I wasn't sure if he'd see it. He's a very good fellow. [*With a smile.*] He spent at least half an hour telling me how he adored Mrs. Stopfort.

DAISY. [*Good-humouredly.*] Oh, you know I'm not the sort of woman to grouse because you're a little late. I can always occupy myself by thinking how wonderful it will be to see you. And if I get bored with that I read your letters again.

GEORGE. I shouldn't have thought they were worth that.

DAISY. I think I have every word you have ever written to me—those old letters of ten years ago and the little notes you write to me now. Even though they're only two or three lines, saying you'll come here or can't come, they're precious to me.

GEORGE. But do you keep them here?

DAISY. Yes, they're safe here. They're locked up in that box. Only amah has the key of this room . . . George.

GEORGE. Yes.

DAISY. Will you do something for me?

GEORGE. If I can.

DAISY. Will you dine here to-night? Amah will get us a lovely little dinner.

GEORGE. Oh, my dear, I can't! I've got an official dinner that I can't possibly get out of.

DAISY. Oh, how rotten!

GEORGE. But I thought Harry was coming back this morning. He's been gone a week already.

DAISY. I had a letter saying he had to go on to Kalgan. But don't say anything about it. He told me I was to keep it a secret.

GEORGE. He must hate having to be away so much as he's been lately. The death of that man Gregson has upset things rather.

DAISY. [*Smiling.*] I wish I could thank Gregson for the good turn he did *us* by dying at the psychological moment.

GEORGE. [*Dryly.*] I don't suppose that was his intention.

DAISY. Except for that Harry would have insisted on going to Chung-king. Now there's no possibility of that for at least a year.

GEORGE. I suppose not.

DAISY. We've got a year before us, George, a whole year. And in a year anything can happen.

GEORGE. [*Gravely.*] Do you never have any feeling that we've behaved rottenly to Harry?

DAISY. I? I've been happy for the first time in my life. At last I've known peace and rest. Oh, George, I'm so grateful for all you've given me! In these three months you've changed the whole world for me. I thought I

couldn't love you more than I did. I think every day my love grows more consuming.

GEORGE. [*With a sigh.*] I've never known a single moment's happiness.

DAISY. That's not true. When I've held you in my arms I've looked into your eyes and I've seen.

GEORGE. Oh, I know. There've been moments of madness in which I forgot everything but that I loved you. I'm a low rotten cad. No one could despise me more than I despise myself. I've loved you so that there was room for nothing else in my soul. Waking and sleeping you've obsessed me.

DAISY. That's how I want you to love me.

GEORGE. And I've hated myself for loving you. I've hated you for making me love you. I've struggled with all my might and a hundred times I thought I'd conquered myself and then the touch of your hand, the softness of your lips—I was like a bird in a cage, I beat myself against the bars and all the time the door was open and I hadn't the will to fly out.

DAISY. [*Tenderly.*] Oh, darling, why do you make yourself unhappy when happiness lies in the hollow of your hand?

GEORGE. Have you never regretted anything?

DAISY. Never.

GEORGE. You're stronger than I am. I'm as weak as dishwater. It's funny that it should have taken me all these years to find it out. I was weak from the beginning. But I was weakest of all that day. I was distracted, I thought you were dying, I forgot everything except that I loved you.

DAISY. [*With passion.*] Oh, my sweetheart! Don't you remember how, late in the night, we went outside the temple and looked at the moonlight on the walls of the Forbidden City? You had no regrets then.

GEORGE. [*Going on with his own thoughts.*] And afterwards your tears, your happiness, the dread of giving you

pain and the hot love that burnt me—I was in the toils then. I too knew a happiness that I had never known before. On one side was honesty and duty and everything that makes a man respect himself—and on the other was love. I thought you'd be going away in two or three weeks and that would be the end of it. Oh, it was no excuse—there are no excuses for me, I can never look Harry in the face again, but though my heart was breaking at the thought, I—I knew that in a few days I should see you for the last time.

DAISY. [*Scornfully.*] Do you think I'd have gone then?

GEORGE. And then came that sudden, unexpected, disastrous change in all Harry's plans. And this house and all the sordid horror of an intrigue. And then there was nothing to do but face the fact that I was a cur. I wouldn't wish my worst enemy the torture that I've undergone.

DAISY. [*Full of love and pity.*] Oh, my darling, you know I'd do anything in the world to give you happiness!

GEORGE. [*Sombrely looking away from her.*] Daisy, I think you can never give me happiness, but you can help me, not to make amends because that's impossible, but to . . . [*Impulsively, looking at her now.*] Oh, Daisy, do you really love me?

DAISY. With all my heart. With all my soul.

GEORGE. Then help me. Let us finish.

DAISY. [*Quickly.*] What do you mean?

GEORGE. I don't want to seem a prig. I don't want to preach. Heaven knows, I've never pretended to be a saint. But what we've done is wrong. You must see that as plainly as I do.

DAISY. Is it wrong to love? How can I help it?

GEORGE. Daisy, I want to—cease doing wrong.

DAISY. You make me impatient. How can you be so weak?

GEORGE. I want you to believe that I love you. But I can't go on with this deceit. I'd sooner shoot myself.

DAISY. You couldn't say that if you loved me as I love you.

GEORGE. [*Brutally.*] I *don't* love you any more.

DAISY. [*With a scornful shrug.*] That's not true.

GEORGE. [*Clenching his teeth.*] I came here to-day to tell you that—well, that it's finished and done with. Oh, God, I don't want to make you unhappy! But you must see we can't go on. Everything that's decent in me revolts at the thought. I beseech you to forget me.

DAISY. As if I could.

GEORGE. I'm going away for a bit.

DAISY. [*Startled.*] You? Why?

GEORGE. I didn't trust myself, you see; I've lost my nerve, so I applied for short leave. I'm sailing for Vancouver on the *Empress*. I leave here the day after to-morrow.

DAISY. [*Suddenly distraught.*] You don't mean that you're going to leave me? I didn't pay any attention to what you said. I thought it was just a mood. George, George, say that you don't mean that?

GEORGE. It's the only thing to do, for your sake and Harry's and mine. [*Taking his courage in both hands.*] This is good-bye, Daisy.

DAISY. [*Seizing him by the shoulders.*] Let me look at your eyes. George, you're crazy. You can't go.

GEORGE. [*Drawing away.*] For God's sake, don't touch me. I wanted to break it to you gently. I don't know what's happened. Everything has gone wrong. I'm going, Daisy, and nothing in the world can move me. I implore you to bear it bravely. [*She looks at him with suffering, anxious eyes. She is stunned.*] I'm afraid you're going to be awfully unhappy for a little while. But I beseech you to have courage. Soon the pain won't be so great, and then you'll see I've done the only possible thing.

DAISY. [*Sullenly.*] How long are you going for?

GEORGE. Three or four months. [*A pause.*] I knew

you'd be brave, Daisy. Do you know, I was afraid you'd cry most awfully. It tears my heart to see you cry.

DAISY. Do you think I'm a child? Do you think I can cry now?

GEORGE. It's good-bye, then, Daisy.

[*She does not answer. She hardly hears what he says. He hesitates an instant wretchedly, and then goes quickly out of the room.* DAISY *stands as if she were turned to stone. Her face is haggard. In a minute* LEE TAI *comes softly in. He stands at the door, looking at her, then gives a little cough. She turns round and sees him.*

DAISY. [*Fiercely.*] What do you want?

LEE TAI. I was waiting till you were disengaged.

DAISY. Have you been listening?

LEE TAI. I have heard.

DAISY. I wish I could have seen you with your ear to the keyhole. You must have looked dignified.

[*She begins to laugh, angrily, hysterically, beside herself.*

LEE TAI. Let me give you a cup of tea. It's quite warm still.

DAISY. I should have thought you were rather old and fat to stoop so much.

LEE TAI. Fortunately the windows are only covered with rice paper, so I was saved that inconvenience.

[*He hands her a cup of tea. She takes it and flings it at him. The tea is splashed over his black robe.*

DAISY. Get out of here or I'll kill you.

[*He wipes his dress with a large silk pocket handkerchief.*

LEE TAI. You forget sometimes the manners that were taught you at that elegant school for young ladies in England.

DAISY. I suppose you've come to crow over me. Well, crow.

LEE TAI. I told you that I thought I should not have to wait very long.

DAISY. [*Scornfully.*] You fool. Do you think it's finished?

LEE TAI. Did I not tell you that the white man's love was weak and vacillating?

DAISY. He's going away for four months. Do you think that frightens me? He's loved me for ten years. I've loved him for ten years. Do you think he can forget me in four months? He'll come back.

LEE TAI. Not to you.

DAISY. Yes, yes, yes. And when he comes it'll be for good. He'll hunger for me as he hungered before. He'll forget his scruples, his remorse, his stupid duties, because he'll only remember me.

LEE TAI. [*Very quietly.*] He's going to be married to Miss Sylvia Knox.

[DAISY *springs at him and seizes him by the throat.*

DAISY. That's a lie. That's a lie. Take it back. You pig.

[*He takes her hands and drags them away from his throat. He holds her fast.*

LEE TAI. Ask your mother. She knows. The Chinese all know.

DAISY. [*Calling.*] Amah, amah. It's a lie. How dare you?

LEE TAI. He told you he was going to an official dinner, but he didn't tell you that as soon as he could get away he was going to play bridge at the Knoxes'. Pity you don't play. They might have asked you too.

[*The* AMAH *comes in.*

AMAH. You call me, Daisy?

DAISY. [*Snatching her hands away.*] Let me go, you fool. [*To the* AMAH.] He says George Conway is engaged to Harold Knox's sister. It's not true.

AMAH. I no sabe. George's boy say so. Knox the night before last at the club, he say to his friend,

George Conway and my sister, they going to make a match of it.

[*A horrible change comes over* DAISY'S *face as all its features become distorted with rage and jealousy.*

DAISY. The liar.

[*She stares in front of her, hatred, anger, and mortification seething in her heart. Then she gives a cruel malicious chuckle. She goes quickly to the Korean chest and flings it open. She takes out a parcel of letters and crossing back swiftly to* LEE TAI *thrusts them in his hands.*

LEE TAI. What is this?

DAISY. They're the letters he wrote me. Let them come into Harry's hands.

LEE TAI. Why?

DAISY. So that Harry may know everything.

LEE TAI. [*After a moment's thought.*] And what will you do for me if I do this for you?

DAISY. What you like. . . . Only they must get to him quickly. George goes away the day after to-morrow.

LEE TAI. Where is your husband?

DAISY. Kalgan.

LEE TAI. The letters shall reach him to-morrow morning. I'll send them by car.

DAISY. It'll be a pleasant surprise for his breakfast.

LEE TAI. Daisy.

DAISY. Go quickly—or I shall change my mind. There'll be plenty of time for everything else after to-morrow.

LEE TAI. I'll go.

[LEE TAI *goes out.* DAISY *gives him a look of contempt.*

DAISY. Fool.

AMAH. What you mean, Daisy?

DAISY. Harry will divorce me. And then . . .

[DAISY *gives a little cry of triumph.*

END OF SCENE VI

SCENE VII

SCENE VII

The sitting room in the ANDERSONS' *apartments.*
The scene is the same as SCENE IV. DAISY *and the* AMAH.
DAISY *is walking restlessly backwards and forwards.*

DAISY. At what time does the train from Kalgan get in?

AMAH. Five o'clock, my think so.

DAISY. What time is it now?

[*The* AMAH *takes a large gold watch out and looks at it.*

AMAH. My watch no walkee.

DAISY. Why don't you have it mended? What's the good of a watch that doesn't go?

AMAH. Gold watch. Eighteen carats. Cost velly much money. Give me plenty face.

DAISY. [*Impatiently.*] Go and ask Wu what time it is.

AMAH. I know time. I tell by the sun. More better than European watch. I think half-past four perhaps.

DAISY. Why doesn't George come?

AMAH. Perhaps he velly busy.

DAISY. You gave him the note yourself?

AMAH. Yes, I give him letter.

DAISY. What did he say?

AMAH. He no say nothing. He look: damn, damn.

DAISY. Did you tell him it was very important?

AMAH. I say, you come quick. Chop-chop.

DAISY. Yes.

AMAH. I tell you before. Why you want me tell you again? He say he come chop-chop when he get away from office.

DAISY. As if the office mattered now. I ought to have gone to him myself.

AMAH. You no make him come more quick because you walk up down. Why you no sit still?

DAISY. The train is never punctual. It'll take Harry at least twenty minutes to get out here.

AMAH. Lee Tai . . .

DAISY. [*Interrupting.*] Don't talk to me of Lee Tai. Why on earth should I bother about Lee Tai?

AMAH. [*Taking up an opium pipe that is on the table.*] Shall Amah make her little Daisy a pipe? Daisy very restless.

DAISY. Have you got opium?

AMAH. Lee Tai give me some. [*She shows* DAISY *a small tin box.*] Number one quality. You have one little pipe, Daisy.

DAISY. No.

[WU *comes in with a card. He gives it to* DAISY.

Miss Knox. Say I'm not at home.

WU. Yes, missy.

[*He is about to go out.*

DAISY. Stop. Is she alone?

WU. She ride up to gate with gentleman and lady. She say can she see you for two, three minutes.

DAISY. [*After a moment's consideration.*] Tell her to come in.

[WU *goes out.*

AMAH. What you want to see her for, Daisy?

DAISY. Mind your own business.

AMAH. George come very soon now.

DAISY. I shall get rid of her as soon as he does. [*Almost to herself.*] I want to see for myself.

[SYLVIA *comes in. She wears a riding-habit.* DAISY *greets her cordially. Her manner, which was restless, becomes on a sudden gay, gracious, and friendly.*

DAISY. Oh, my dear, how sweet of you to come all this way!

[*The* AMAH *slips out.*

SYLVIA. I can only stop a second. I was riding with

the Fergusons and we passed your temple. I thought I'd just run in and see how you were. I haven't seen you for an age.

DAISY. Are the Fergusons waiting outside?

SYLVIA. They rode on. They said they'd fetch me in five minutes.

DAISY. [*Smiling.*] How did your bridge party go off last night?

SYLVIA. How on earth did you hear about that? Did Mr. Conway tell you? I wish you played bridge. We really had rather a lark.

DAISY. George didn't come in till late, I suppose?

SYLVIA. Oh, no, he got away in fairly decent time. Where there's a will there's a way, you know, even at official functions.

DAISY. [*With a little laugh.*] Oh, I know! I'm expecting him here in a minute. I hope you won't have to go before he comes.

SYLVIA. Well, I saw him yesterday. I can live one day without seeing him.

DAISY. I wonder if he can live one day without seeing you?

SYLVIA. I'm tolerably sure he can do that.

DAISY. [*As if she were merely teasing.*] A little bird has whispered to me that there's a very pretty blonde in Peking . . .

SYLVIA. [*Interrupting.*] Probably peroxide.

DAISY. Not in this case. Who is not entirely indifferent to the Assistant Chinese Secretary at the British Legation.

SYLVIA. Fancy!

DAISY. I suppose you haven't an idea who I'm talking about?

SYLVIA. Not a ghost.

DAISY. Then why do you blush to the roots of your hair?

SYLVIA. I was outraged at your suggestion that my hair was dyed.

DAISY. It's too bad of me to tease you, isn't it?

SYLVIA. I'm a perfect owl. You know what a tactless idiot my brother is. He will chaff me about George Conway, so it makes me self-conscious when anybody talks about him.

DAISY. Darling, it's nothing to be ashamed of. Why shouldn't you be in love with him?

SYLVIA. [*With a laugh.*] But I'm not in love with him.

DAISY. Why does your brother chaff you then?

SYLVIA. Because he's under the delusion that it's funny.

DAISY. But you do like him, don't you?

SYLVIA. Of course I like him . . . I think he's a very good sort.

DAISY. Would you marry him if he asked you?

SYLVIA. My dear, what are you talking about? The thought never entered my head.

DAISY. Oh, what nonsense! When a man's as attentive to a girl as George has been to you she can't help asking herself if she'd like to marry him or not.

SYLVIA. [*Coldly, but still smiling.*] Can't she? I'm afraid I haven't a close acquaintance with that sort of girl.

DAISY. Am I being very vulgar? You know, we half-castes are sometimes.

SYLVIA. [*With a trace of impatience.*] Of course you're not vulgar. But I don't know why you want to talk about something that's absolute Greek to me.

DAISY. The natural curiosity of the Eurasian. Everybody tells me that you're engaged to George.

SYLVIA. Look at my hand.

[*She stretches out her left hand so that* DAISY *should see there is no ring on the fourth finger.* DAISY *stares at it for a moment.*

DAISY. You always used to wear an engagement ring.

SYLVIA. [*Gravely.*] It was put on my finger by a poor boy who was killed. I meant to wear it always.

DAISY. Why have you taken it off?

[*She looks at* SYLVIA. *She can no longer preserve her artificial gaiety and her voice is cold and hard. Before* SYLVIA *can answer* GEORGE CONWAY *comes in.*

DAISY. [*Regaining with an effort her earlier sprightliness.*] There you are at last.

GEORGE. I couldn't come sooner. I was with the Minister.

DAISY. We were wondering why you were so late.

SYLVIA. Daisy was wondering.

GEORGE. [*Shaking hands with Sylvia.*] I thought that was your pony outside.

SYLVIA. Clever.

GEORGE. The Fergusons were just riding up as I came.

SYLVIA. Oh, they've come to fetch me! I must bolt.

GEORGE. I'm afraid we kept you up till all sorts of hours last night.

SYLVIA. Not a bit. Do I look jaded?

GEORGE. Of course not. You young things can stay up till three in the morning and be as fresh as paint. Wait till you're my age.

SYLVIA. You haven't passed your hundredth birthday yet, have you?

GEORGE. Not quite. But I'm old enough to be your father.

SYLVIA. I will not stay and listen to you talk rubbish. Good-bye, Daisy. Do come and see me one day this week.

DAISY. Good-bye.

GEORGE. I'll come and help you mount, shall I?

SYLVIA. Oh, no, don't bother! Mr. Ferguson is there.

GEORGE. Oh, all right!

[*She goes out.*

DAISY. [*Her smiles vanishing, hostile and cold.*] You might shut the door.

GEORGE. [*Doing so.*] I will.

DAISY. Aren't you going to kiss me?

GEORGE. Daisy.

DAISY. [*Hastily.*] Oh, no, it doesn't matter! Don't bother.

GEORGE. You said you wanted to see me very importantly.

DAISY. It's kind of you to have come.

GEORGE. [*With an effort at ease of manner.*] My dear child, what are you talking about? You must know that if there's anything in the world I can do for you I'm only too anxious to do it.

DAISY. Is that girl in love with you?

GEORGE. Good heavens, no! What put that idea in your head?

DAISY. The eyes in my head.

GEORGE. What perfect nonsense!

DAISY. Has it never occurred to you that she was in love with you?

GEORGE. Never.

DAISY. Why do you lie to me? I've been told that you were engaged to her.

GEORGE. That's ludicrous. It's absolutely untrue.

DAISY. Yes, I think it is. At the first moment I believed it. And then I thought it over and I knew it couldn't be true. I don't think you'd do anything underhand.

GEORGE. At all events I shouldn't do that.

DAISY. In fairness to me or in fairness to her?

GEORGE. My dear Daisy, what are you talking about?

DAISY. Did you break with me yesterday so that you might be free to propose to her?

GEORGE. No, I swear I didn't.

DAISY. Why are you so emphatic?

GEORGE. Oh, Daisy, what's the good of tormenting yourself and tormenting me? You know I loved you just as much as you loved me. But I'm not like you. It was a torture. I knew it was wrong and hateful. I couldn't go on.

DAISY. Do you think it would have seemed wrong and hateful if it hadn't been for Sylvia?

GEORGE. Yes.

DAISY. You don't say that very convincingly.

GEORGE. I do think it is because she is so loyal, and good and straight that I saw so clearly what a cad I was. I think I found courage to do the only possible thing in her frankness and honesty.

DAISY. I think you deceive yourself. Are you sure this admiration of yours for all her admirable qualities isn't—love?

GEORGE. My dear, I'm unfit to love her.

DAISY. She doesn't think so. If you asked her to marry you she'd accept.

GEORGE. [*Impatiently.*] What nonsense. What in heaven's name made you think that?

DAISY. I made it my business to find out.

GEORGE. Well, you can set your mind at rest. I'm not going to ask her to marry me.

[*The* AMAH *comes in.*

AMAH. Five o'clock, Daisy.

DAISY. Leave me alone.

[*The* AMAH *goes out.*

GEORGE. When does Harry come back?

DAISY. [*After a pause, in a strange, hoarse voice.*] To-day.

GEORGE. [*Surprised at her tone and manner.*] Is anything the matter, Daisy?

DAISY. I'm afraid I have some very bad news for you.

GEORGE. [*Startled.*] Oh!

DAISY. You know those letters. I kept them locked in the box. Lee Tai was furious because I wouldn't have anything to do with him. Last night he broke open the box. He's sent the letters to Harry.

GEORGE. [*Overwhelmed.*] My God!

DAISY. I'm awfully sorry. It wasn't my fault. I couldn't dream that there was any risk.

GEORGE. Was that why you sent for me?

DAISY. Say you don't hate me.

GEORGE. Oh, poor Harry!

DAISY. Don't think of him now. Think of me.

GEORGE. What do we matter now, you and I? We're a pair of rotters. Harry is a white man through and through. He loved you, and he trusted me.

DAISY. What are we going to do?

GEORGE. Give me a minute. I'm all at sixes and sevens. It's such a knock-out blow.

DAISY. Harry will be here soon. His train's due at five.

GEORGE. We'll wait for him.

DAISY. What?

GEORGE. Did you think I was going to run away? I'll stay and face him.

DAISY. He'll kill you.

GEORGE. [*With anguish.*] I wish to God he would.

DAISY. Oh, George, how can you be so cruel? Don't you love me any more? I love you. George, what is to become of me if you desert me?

GEORGE. Harry loves you so much and he loves me too. Heaven knows what sacrifices he's not capable of. Oh, I'm so ashamed!

DAISY. Why do you bother about him? He doesn't count. He'll get over it. After all, what can he do? He can only divorce me and perhaps we can get him to let me divorce him.

GEORGE. Could you *allow* him to do that?

DAISY. It means so little to a man. I don't care, I was thinking of you. It would make it so much easier for you. [*He gives her a quick look. He perceives the allusion to marriage.*] George, George, you wouldn't leave—leave me in the cart.

GEORGE. Of course I'll marry you.

DAISY. [*Smiling now, loving and tender.*] Oh, George, we shall be so happy. And you know, some day I'm sure

you'll think it's better as it's turned out. I hate all this deceit just as much as you do. Oh, it'll make such a difference when our love can be open and above board. When I'm your wife you'll forget all that has tormented you. Oh, George, I know we shall be happy!

[*All this time* GEORGE *has been thinking deeply.*

GEORGE. How do you know that Lee Tai sent those wretched letters to Harry?

DAISY. He sent me a message. He wasn't satisfied with doing a dirty trick. He wanted me to know that he'd done it.

GEORGE. How did he know you kept my letters there?

DAISY. I told you I was reading them while I waited for you. He came in and I put them away. I suppose he suspected. It was very easy for him to get into the room after amah and I went away.

GEORGE. [*Sarcastically.*] Had you left the key of the box on the table?

DAISY. What do you mean, George? I'd locked it up. Of course I took the key with me. I suppose he broke it open. What does it matter? The harm's done.

GEORGE. How do you know Harry received the letters this morning?

DAISY. Lee Tai said he would.

GEORGE. In Kalgan?

DAISY. Yes.

GEORGE. How did he know Harry was in Kalgan?

DAISY. The Chinese know all one's movements.

GEORGE. They can't do miracles. Harry was going up there unexpectedly on a private mission. The fellows in that company know very well how to keep their own counsel when it's needful. . . . I imagine you were the only person in Peking who knew Harry was going to Kalgan.

DAISY. [*Casually.*] Well, it appears I wasn't.

GEORGE. How do you suppose Lee Tai found out some-

thing that Harry had particularly told you to keep quiet about?

DAISY. How can I tell? He may have found out from the amah for all I know.

GEORGE. Surely you hadn't told her?

DAISY. Of course not. She may have read the letter. She always does read my letters.

GEORGE. Can she read English?

DAISY. Enough to find out about other people's business.

GEORGE. Why should she have told Lee Tai?

DAISY. I suppose he bribed her. She'd do anything for a hundred dollars.

GEORGE. Not if it would do you harm.

DAISY. She's not so devoted to me as all that.

GEORGE. She's your mother, Daisy.

DAISY. [*Quickly.*] How d'you know?

GEORGE. Harry told me.

DAISY. I thought he was too ashamed of it to do that.

GEORGE. [*Persistently.*] How did Lee Tai know that Harry was in Kalgan?

DAISY. I tell you I don't know. Why do you cross-examine me? Good God, I'm harassed enough without that! What do you mean?

GEORGE. [*He seizes her wrists and draws her violently to him.*] Daisy, did you send those letters to Harry yourself?

DAISY. Never! Do you think I'm crazy?

GEORGE. Did you give them to Lee Tai to send?

DAISY. No.

GEORGE. God damn you, speak the truth! I will have the truth for once in your life.

[*They stare at one another. He is stern and angry. She pulls herself together. She is fierce and defiant. She shakes herself free of him.*

DAISY. I gave them to Lee Tai.

GEORGE. [*Hiding his face with his hands.*] My God!

DAISY. He told me you were engaged to Sylvia. For a moment I believed it and I gave him the letters. I hardly knew what I was doing. And now, even though I know it wasn't true, I'm glad. I wish I'd done it long before.

GEORGE. You fiend!

DAISY. [*Violently.*] Do you think I'm going to let you go so easily? Do you think I've done all I have to let you marry that silly little English girl?

GEORGE. [*With anguish.*] Oh, Daisy, how could you?

DAISY. Has it never struck you how you came to be wounded that night? It wasn't you they wanted. It was Harry.

GEORGE. I know. [*Suddenly understanding.*] Daisy!

DAISY. Yes, I could do that. I only wish it had succeeded.

GEORGE. I can't believe it.

DAISY. You're mine, mine, mine, and I'll never let you go.

GEORGE. [*With increasing violence.*] Do you think I can ever look at you again without horror? In my heart I've known always that you were evil. Ten years ago when I first loved you there was a deep instinct within that warned me. Even though my heart was breaking for love of you I knew that you were truthless and cruel. I've loved you, yes, but all the time I've hated you. I've loved you, but with the baser part of me. All that was in me that was honest and decent and upright revolted against you. Always, always. This love has been a loathsome cancer in my heart. I couldn't rid me of it without killing myself, but I abhorred it. I felt that I was degraded by the love that burned me.

DAISY. What do I care so long as you love? You can think anything you like of me. The fact remains that you love me.

GEORGE. If you had no pity for Harry, who raised you from the gutter and gave you everything he had to give,

oh, if you'd loved me you'd have had mercy on me. What do you think our life can be together? Don't you know what I shall be? Ruined and abject and hopeless. Oh, not only in the eyes of everyone who knows me shall I be degraded, but in my own. Do you think there's much happiness for you there?

DAISY. I shall have you. That's all the happiness I want. I'd rather be wretched with you—oh, a thousand times—than happy with anyone else.

GEORGE. [*Wrathfully, trying to wound her.*] You were tormenting me just now because you were jealous of Sylvia. Do you know what I felt for her? It wasn't love —at least not what you mean by love. I can never love anyone as I've loved you and God knows I'm thankful. But I had such a respect for her. I've been so wretched and she offered me peace. And I did think that some day when all this horror was over, if I could do something to make myself feel clean again, I should go to her and, all unworthy, ask her if she would take me. And now the bitterest pang of all is to think that she must know what an unspeakable cad I've always been.

[*He has flung himself into a chair. He is in despair.* DAISY *goes up to him and going down on her knees beside him puts her arm round him. She is very tender.*

DAISY. Oh, George, I can make you forget her so easily. You don't know what my love can do. I know I've been horrible, but it's only been because I loved you. Ten years ago I was all that she is. I'm like clay in your hands and you can make me what you will. Oh, George, say you forgive me!

[*In the caressing gestures of her hands as she tries to move him one of them rests by chance on his coat pocket. She feels something hard. He moves slightly away.*

GEORGE. Take care.

DAISY. What's that in your pocket?

GEORGE. It's my revolver. Since my accident I've always carried it about with me. It's rather silly, but the Minister asked me to. He said he'd feel safer.

DAISY. Oh, George, if you only knew the agony I suffered when you were brought in! The remorse, the fear! I thought I should go mad.

GEORGE. [*With a bitter chuckle.*] It must have been rather a sell for you.

DAISY. Oh, you can laugh! I knew you'd forgive me. My darling.

GEORGE. I'm sorry for all the rough things I said to you, Daisy. I don't blame you for anything. You only acted according to your lights. The only person I can blame is myself. It's only reasonable that I should suffer the punishment.

DAISY. My sweetheart!

GEORGE. I suppose you know that I shall be quite ruined.

DAISY. You'll have to leave the service. Does that really matter to you very much?

GEORGE. It was my whole life.

DAISY. You'll get a job in the post office. With your knowledge of the language they'll simply jump at you. It's a Chinese service. It has nothing to do with Europeans.

GEORGE. Do you think the postmaster in a small Chinese city is a very lucrative position?

DAISY. What does money matter? If I'd wanted money I could have got all I wanted from Lee Tai. We can do with very little. You don't know what a clever housekeeper I am.

GEORGE. [*In a level, dead voice.*] I'm sure you're wonderful.

DAISY. We'll go to some city where there are no foreigners. And we shall be together always. We'll have a house high up on the bank and below us the river will flow, flow endlessly.

GEORGE. You seem to have got it all mapped out.

DAISY. If you only knew how often I've dreamed of it. Oh, George, I want rest and peace too! I'm so tired. I want endless days to rest in. [*With a puzzled look at him.*] What is the matter? You look so strange.

GEORGE. [*With a weary sigh.*] I was thinking of all the things you've been saying to me.

DAISY. If you think it'll be easier for you if you don't marry me, you need not. I don't care anything about that. I'll be your mistress and I'll lie hidden in your house so that no one shall know I'm there. I'll live like a Chinese woman. I'll be your slave and your plaything. I want to get away from all these Europeans. After all, China is the land of my birth and the land of my mother. China is crowding in upon me; I'm sick of these foreign clothes. I have a strange hankering for the ease of the Chinese dress. You've never seen me in it?

GEORGE. Never.

DAISY. [*With a smile.*] You'd hardly know me. I'll be a little Chinese girl living in the foreigner's house. Have you ever smoked opium?

GEORGE. No. [DAISY *takes the* AMAH'S *long pipe in her hands.*[Who does that belong to?

DAISY. It's amah's. One day you shall try and I'll make your pipes for you. Lee Tai used to say that no one could make them better than I.

GEORGE. However low down the ladder you go there's apparently always a rung lower.

DAISY. After you've smoked a pipe or two your mind grows extraordinarily clear. You have a strange facility of speech and yet no desire to speak. All the puzzles of this puzzling world grow plain to you. You are tranquil and free. Your soul is gently released from the bondage of your body, and it plays, happy and careless, like a child with flowers. Death cannot frighten you, and want and misery are like blue mountains far away. You feel a heavenly power possess you and you can venture all things

because suffering cannot touch you. Your spirit has wings and you fly like a bird through the starry wastes of the night. You hold space and time in the hollow of your hand. Then you come upon the dawn, all pearly and gray and silent, and there in the distance, like a dreamless sleep, is the sea.

GEORGE. You are showing me a side of you I never knew.

DAISY. Do you think you know me yet? I don't know myself. In my heart there are secrets that are strange even to me, and spells to bind you to me, and enchantments so that you will never weary.

[*A pause.*

GEORGE. [*Standing up.*] I'll go and get myself a drink. After all these alarums and excursions I really think I deserve it.

DAISY. Amah will bring it to you.

GEORGE. Oh, it doesn't matter! I can easily fetch it myself. The whisky's in the dining-room, isn't it?

DAISY. I expect so.

[*He goes out.* DAISY *goes over to a chest which stands in the room and throws it open. She takes out the Manchu dress which Harry once gave her and handles it smilingly. She holds up in both her hands the sumptuous headdress. There is the sound of a door being locked.* DAISY *puts down the headdress and looks at the door enquiringly.*

DAISY. [*With a little smile.*] What are you locking the door for, George? [*The words are hardly out of her mouth before there is the report of a pistol shot.* DAISY *gives a shriek and rushes towards the door.*] George! George! What have you done? [*She beats frantically on the door.*] Let me in! Let me in! George!

[*The* AMAH *comes in running from the courtyard.*

AMAH. What's the matter? I hear shot.

DAISY. Send the boys, quick. We must break down this door.

AMAH. I send the boys away. I no want them here when Harry come.

DAISY. George! George! Speak to me. [*She beats violently on the door.*] Oh, what shall I do?

AMAH. Daisy, what's the matter?

DAISY. He's killed himself sooner—sooner than . . .

AMAH. [*Aghast.*] Oh!

[DAISY *staggers back into the room.*

DAISY. Oh, my God!

[*She sinks down on the floor. She beats it with her fist. The* AMAH *looks at her for an instant, then with quick determination seizes her shoulder.*

AMAH. Daisy, Harry come soon.

DAISY. [*With a violent gesture.*] Leave me alone. What do I care if Harry comes?

AMAH. You no can stay here. Come with me quick.

DAISY. Go away. Damn you!

AMAH. [*Stern and decided.*] Don't you talk foolish now. You come. Lee Tai waiting for you.

DAISY. [*With a sudden suspicion.*] Did you know this was going to happen? George! George!

AMAH. Harry will kill you if he find you here. Come with me. [*There is a knocking at the outer gate.*] There he is. Daisy! Daisy!

DAISY. Don't torture me.

AMAH. I bolt that door. He no get in that way. He must come round through temple. You come quick and I hide you. We slip out when he safe.

DAISY. [*With scornful rage.*] Do you think I'm frightened of Harry?

AMAH. He come velly soon now.

[DAISY *raises herself to her feet. A strange look comes over her face.*

DAISY. Lee Tai has made a mistake again. Bolt that door.

[*The* AMAH *runs to it and slips the bolt. While she does this* DAISY *takes the tin of opium and quickly swal-*

lows some of the contents. The AMAH *turns round and sees her. She gives a gasp. She runs forward and snatches the tin from* DAISY's *hand.*

AMAH. What you do, Daisy? Daisy, you die!

DAISY. Yes, I die. The day has come. The jungle takes back its own.

AMAH. [*Distraught.*] Oh, Daisy! Daisy! My little flower.

DAISY. How long will it take? [*The* AMAH *sobs desperately.* DAISY *goes to the Manchu clothes and takes them up.*] Help me to put these on.

AMAH. [*Dumbfounded.*] What you mean, Daisy?

DAISY. Curse you, do as I tell you!

AMAH. I think you crazy. [DAISY *slips into the long skirt and the* AMAH *with trembling hands helps her into the coat. In the middle of her dressing* DAISY *staggers.*] Daisy.

DAISY. [*Recovering herself.*] Don't be a fool. I'm all right.

AMAH. [*In a terrified whisper.*] There's Harry.

DAISY. Give me the headdress.

HARRY. [*Outside.*] Open the door.

DAISY. Be quick.

AMAH. I no understand. You die, Daisy. You die.

[*The knocking is repeated more violently.*

HARRY. [*Shouting.*] Daisy! Amah! Open the door. If you don't open I'll break it down.

[DAISY *is ready. She steps on to the pallet and sits in the Chinese fashion.*

DAISY. Go to the door. Open when I tell you.

[*There is by* DAISY's *side a box in which are the paints and pencils the Chinese lady uses to make up her face.* DAISY *opens it. She takes out a hand mirror.*

HARRY. Who's there? Open, I tell you! Open!

[DAISY *puts rouge on her cheeks. She takes a black pencil and touches her eyebrows. She gives them a slight slant so that she looks on a sudden absolutely Chinese.*

DAISY. Open!

[*The* AMAH *draws the bolt and* HARRY *bursts in.*

HARRY. Daisy! [*He comes forward impetuously and then on a sudden stops. He is taken aback. Something, he knows not what, comes over him and he feels helpless and strangely weak.*] Daisy, what does it mean? These letters. [*He takes them out of his pocket and thrusts them towards her. She takes no notice of him.*] Daisy, speak to me. I don't understand. [*He staggers towards her with outstretched hands.*] For God's sake, say it isn't true.

[*Motionless she contemplates in the mirror the Chinese woman of the reflection.*

THE END

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